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ABSTRACT

Designed primarily for the use of language arts teachers in the secondary schools, this inservice resource booklet provides a consistent emphasis on developing and strengthening skills in functional and creative writing. Following an introduction, the booklet presents a brief guide for the inservice leader, and a self-corrective test for teachers on the components of writing and instruction. The major portion of the booklet is divided into two parts. The first part introduces functional writing and includes sentence and paragraph building, essay tests, and the research paper. The second part introduces creative writing and includes the short story, the novel and drama, biography, and poetry. Each of the components presented in these two sections contains a discussion of its objective, the instructional concept, and suggested application with learners. A section of general review notes contains appropriate responses to the pretest found at the beginning of the booklet. The booklet concludes with appendixes on poetry, a bibliography, and a glossary. (HTH)

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Write On:

Teaching Written Communication

IN/SERVICE EDUCATION

1980 YEAR OF THE SCHOOL IN OHIO

THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COLUMBUS 1980

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GLOSSARY

alliteration	the repetition of initial consonant sounds
assonance	the resemblance of vowel sounds although the surrounding consonant sounds usually differ
character	those who act and are the receivers of action by others in a story
creative writing	subjective, imaginative writing done to express personal opinions and thoughts in a variety of free forms
creativity	I + E + V = C or interest + experience + vocabulary = creativity
formal essay	a serious and dignified form emphasizing personal opinion based, in varying degrees, on factual material
functional writing	objective, factual writing done to inform an audience
imagery	imaginative figures of speech most often found in poetry
informal essay	a light, chatty, often humorous form emphasizing personal opinion based, in varying degrees, on factual material
melody	the rhyme scheme and sound devices included in a poem
metaphor	the direct comparison of two unlike objects
onomatopoeia	a melodic device in which words sound like their meanings
plot	the action or story line
poetic form	a poem's internal and external structure
research paper	a written synthesis and interpretation of materials obtained through research processes; these support or reject a thesis or explain a subject and are presented in a structured format including footnotes and bibliography
rhythm	the beat or meter of a poem
role playing	assuming the character of anotner person in order to act out or express emotions, feelings, action, and so forth
sensory language	language which appeals to the senses, which helps the reader see, smell, hear, taste, or feel a particular item
setting	the background of a story or poem, the where-when-under what conditions
simile	the comparison of two unlike objects using "like" or "as"
speech tag	the clause which introduces or concludes a direct quotation and tells who is speaking and how they are speaking

FOREWORD

The skill and art of writing are essential for both social and occupational effectiveness. An instructional challenge of the 80's will be to provide a consistent emphasis on developing and strengthening skills in functional and creative writing.

WRITE ON: TEACHING WRITTEN COMMUNICATION was prepared to meet this challenge. The purpose of this inservice resource is to reinforce good teaching practices as well as to assist teachers in employing varied approaches for teaching written communication.

This publication is designed primarily for the use of language arts teachers in the secondary schools. However, it has practical information for all teachers as they relate the skills of written language to the various disciplines. It is suggested that language arts teachers may review the **WRITE ON** publication and then, in the role of a teacher-leader, present and discuss the content with groups of colleagues.

WRITE ON is designed by the Division of Inservice Education to assist teachers with instructional strategies for teaching writing skills and motivating students to experience its personal rewards.

For practical purposes, **WRITE ON** is divided into two major sections which deal with functional and creative writing. It is hoped that this inservice publication may become an additional instructional reference in the school's professional library.

This publication was initially distributed to each of Ohio's junior and senior high school principals. During the last four years frequent requests for additional copies have come from inservice leaders, language arts supervisors, elementary teachers and instructors of college level language arts methods classes. The Ohio Department of Education is proud to consistently meet the needs of both preservice and inservice leaders as they strive to enhance the daily use of the written language so that no Ohio student will be neglected in the development of basic written communication skill.

Franklin B. Walter

Franklin B. Walter
Superintendent of Public Instruction

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INTRODUCTION

WRITE ON: Teaching Written Communication is an inservice publication designed to assist teachers in placing renewed emphasis upon teaching written expression. The content deals with both instruction and suggestions for motivating students to write.

The writing component of the language arts is fundamental to all subjects. Hence, this resource is intended for the use of English teachers and those of other disciplines, as well.

Although various classifications of functional and creative writing are recognized, for the purpose of this publication, the following assumptions regarding this distinction are made:

Creative writing is subjective; functional writing is objective.

Creative writing is imaginative; functional writing is factual.

Creative writing offers broad personal interpretation; functional writing does not.

Creative writing is a leisure/social activity; functional writing is a business-like activity.

Creative writing's effectiveness is not often measurable; functional writing's effectiveness is easily measurable.

Creative writing does not need an audience; functional writing does.

Reflecting this point of view, sections dealing with teaching functional writing include: outlining, application forms, essay tests and writing news articles, reports and research papers. Suggestions for teaching-learning activities in creative writing relate, among others, to the short story, poetry and biography.

The purpose of the self-corrective pre-test is to orient the reader to the publication and to assist in determining sections for special attention. This section is for the teacher's personal use.

The instructional leader guide provides the staff with suggestions for small group discussions dealing with this inservice material.

In order to support and extend the study of teaching written communication, reference notes and a bibliography are included.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER GUIDE

The inservice publications of the Division of Inservice Education are developed on the premise that the most effective professional growth is teacher-centered. **WRITE ON: Teaching Written Communication** follows that premise with the suggestion that the material may be used either for independent study or by a teacher-leader working with a group of colleagues. It is hoped that language arts teachers will be given the opportunity to read through this book. It can also be used diagnostically as a source of ideas to meet evidenced student strengths and needs. In addition, the contents can be the basis for discussions among all language arts teachers.

The individual suggestions presented in this book may be discussed in terms of their appropriateness and applicability or how they might be altered to become more relevant to a particular teaching/learning situation. Discussing the suggested activities will serve an important function if it prompts teachers to share their successful instructional strategies and to brainstorm for other ideas which might be successful in teaching a particular concept. Discussions may also go beyond the scope of the book to deal with ideas such as flexible grouping for individualized instruction and why and how to evaluate written work. It is hoped that this book will also stimulate discussions which lead to the designing of a scope and sequence of writing competencies tailored to a specific school setting.

Some of the classroom applications suggest that teachers enlist other subject area teachers in a team teaching or partnership approach to writing. This type of cooperative planning and teaching can reinforce and carry over values from one subject to another. Students must be able to use language skills of thinking, reading, writing, speaking and listening in learning any type of subject matter effectively. Encouraging the use of good writing skills in a science or social studies class or in any other type of class implies encouraging the use of good thinking skills, for we must all engage in the thinking process before we write. Writing helps to conceptualize, see relationships, draw conclusions — whether thinking through a laboratory experiment or summarizing the study of the Spanish-American War. Therefore, it is hoped that language arts teachers will look for ways to work with other teachers. This discussion can then be broadened to include representatives of other departments, or to design a well-organized presentation which could be made to the entire staff.

Here, then, is the overall objective of this inservice resource — to encourage language arts teachers to renew instruction dealing with written communication, to share their ideas with one another, and to work cooperatively with teachers of all subjects for the benefit of all students. This book is a discussion and thought starter. It suggests teaching/learning activities as a beginning for teachers to go beyond in inservice study.

SELF-CORRECTIVE PRE-TEST

1. What are the primary goals of a language arts teacher?

2. What are the components of creative writing?

3. What are the basic differences between creative and functional writing?

4. What are the three major elements of a short story?

5. What are some of the similarities between biographies and autobiographies?

6. How can formal and informal essays be distinguished from each other?

7. What are the four major elements of poetry?

8. How is a good paragraph like a good play?

9. What are at least four reasons for outlining?

10. Why might the study of application forms be a good use of time in a high school language arts class?

11. What are some of the similarities between a news article and a report?

12. What are some of the words which might signal an essay question?

13. What is the ultimate goal in helping students write research papers?

14. What is the significance of word choice in achieving the writer's purpose?

These questions are for the personal use of individual teachers. Giving thought to the answers will aid in the review of knowledge along with the identification of areas of interest. Possible responses are found on page 82, General Review Notes.

INTRODUCTION TO FUNCTIONAL WRITING

In our distinction between creative and functional writing, we have indicated that functional writing has a definite purpose other than to give expression to one's own ideas and opinions. The types of functional writing discussed in this section, with the exception of the personal letter, are for the most part designed to communicate factual information.

The skills needed for functional writing — and the atmosphere surrounding this type of writing — are very different from those needed for creative writing. Rather than encouraging students to give free rein to their own personal feelings and to experiment with different forms of expression, we teach accepted formats, clarity, brevity, conciseness and objectivity. We are more concerned with good, short sentences and paragraphs which directly answer the communication need and with general grammatical and mechanical structure because we are communicating in a business-like way with others.

One of the most important concepts for students to keep in mind in functional writing is that they are writing for a specific audience, and that audience usually determines the purpose and use of the writing. Creative writing generally has an audience, but whether or not the audience understands or agrees with the writer's feelings and opinions is not of critical importance — unless the writer is trying to earn a living through writing. **Functional writing is intended to present factual material to a particular audience, and audience understanding of that writing is almost always important — sometimes critically important.** For instance, on a social studies test, students will use functional writing skills to convince a teacher of their knowledge and understanding of the subject. The writers of scientific laboratory manuals need to be sure of the safety of experiments and must therefore write clearly to avoid any possible misunderstanding and potential tragedy. Directions for installation of parts or machinery must be written to avoid confusion and possible accident. Examples are endless. These make a case for the need for clarity, but similar examples could also indicate the need for conciseness, for conciseness often leads to clarity.

As with any form of writing, **functional writing is more meaningful to the students if they apply it in a real situation:** writing a business letter and getting a response, submitting a news article to the school or local newspaper and seeing it in print, completing successfully an essay test in a science class, writing a research paper for social studies, and so forth. Creating opportunities for these types of situations many times requires cooperation from teachers of other content areas. It will be helpful to hold an inservice session with, for instance, all tenth-grade science and social studies teachers, or perhaps a teacher-leader from the English department might be given time at a teachers' meeting to talk with the total staff. The purpose of such sessions would be to discuss means of emphasizing good writing, applying the skills which have been emphasized in the language arts classes. If the English teacher helps the students learn to write good responses to essay test questions and the other teachers require only short answers or give only true-false and multiple choice questions, the transfer value of the lesson may be diminished.

All teachers need to encourage good writing from their students and to assist in this learning process. Comments such as:

"Well-written and documented answer"
"Good organization of material"
"Response needs more documentation"

indicate to students that the teacher cares not only **what** is said but also **how** it is said. This reinforces what the English teacher is teaching.

Cooperative projects can also be developed between the language arts teacher and any other teacher. For example, if research papers are required in the science class, the students' language arts teachers might assist the students with format and outline. Through a cooperatively designed, mutually agreeable working plan,

the two teachers and the student could work together toward the finished product with the science teacher considering the content and the language arts teacher the writing. There are times when students are given an assignment and then allowed to sink or swim on their own abilities. While it would take much more time from the teachers, an assignment such as the one suggested above would be a more meaningful learning experience for the student. The relationship between language arts and other subject areas would be firmly cemented.

Business and industry representatives from the community are excellent resource people for the language arts classes. Many non-college bound students feel that writing is a waste of time because they will never have to write again. A representative from a local industry could talk with the class on the writing requirements for the various job levels within his business. What kinds of writing might be required at an entry-level position? What are the chances for advancement for a person who cannot communicate through writing? Almost all jobs require some writing. For example, a service station attendant must know how to complete a credit card slip or a work order accurately. Hearing someone who actually does this or manages people who do it makes much more of an impact on students than hearing it from the teacher.

Teaching good functional writing skills depends largely on student ability to write good sentences and paragraphs. Inherent in these abilities are the skills of logical organization, clarity and conciseness. It is at this point that teaching begins, based on an assessment of student competencies. We cannot ask a student who cannot write a paragraph to write a research paper, nor can a student who cannot write a sentence be expected to write a paragraph. Therefore, the length and type of writing assignments will vary from student to student. **As with any other type of study, the most successful functional writing activities will be those which correspond to where the student is, build on present skills and competencies, and seem relevant to the student.** There will undoubtedly be a great need for flexible grouping in order to provide students with help in particular skill areas.

Other than addressing a section to sentence and paragraph building and outlining, this inservice resource does not deal with remedial work in such areas as capitalization, punctuation, spelling and grammar. There are many books available which do that. **This material is based on the premise that if we can motivate students to place their thoughts on paper, we can help them individually or in small groups when structural or mechanical problems become evident.** The real purpose of the functional writing section is to help students see the need for functional writing competencies, regardless of their future occupation. If they do realize this need — if it is made relevant to them — they are more likely to see the need for sharpening mechanical skills and will welcome guidance in these areas.

SENTENCE BUILDING

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students improve basic skills in sentence building.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

At the beginning of the year, language arts teachers will want to know each student's competencies in grammar, capitalization and punctuation. Often some type of diagnostic instrument is administered at this time, and the results are used to plan instructional objectives for groups and individuals. A standardized test is not a completely effective measure, however, because an error itself may give no clue to its cause. Therefore, teachers need to consider other types of diagnostic procedures. Reviewing student writing samples from the previous year is helpful, including those from language arts and other subject areas. The teacher is a diagnostic listener, for few people write better than they speak. The mistakes made in speaking are generally repeated in writing. After initial diagnoses are made for each student, the teacher decides whether it would be more beneficial for the students to study grammar intensively or to use their grammar in an individualized writing program.

Sentence building is a basic type of assistance for the students who need review. The sentence is the smallest meaningful thought unit we have in written communication. If a student has not mastered sentence construction, activities involving writing paragraphs, short stories and essays are premature.

Several suggested activities for sentence building are provided below.

1.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Ask students to volunteer short, simple sentences (subject and predicate only) and write one or two of these on the chalkboard. From students' suggestions, expand the sentences in as many ways as possible. For example:

The boy called.
The young boy called.
The shy young boy called.
The shy young boy in the blue shirt called.
The shy young boy in the torn blue shirt called.
The shy young boy in the torn blue shirt called frantically.
The shy young boy in the torn blue shirt called frantically to the man.
The shy young boy in the torn blue shirt called frantically to the old man.
The shy young boy in the torn blue shirt called frantically to the old man on the corner.
The shy young boy in the torn blue shirt called frantically to the old man on the corner that a wild animal had attacked him.

You can use this exercise to show that a sentence communicates information and that a good choice of words communicates a more precise picture. The sentence building will also provide the basis for discussing the functions

of adjectives, adverbs, prepositional phrases and other units of grammar. Discuss with students when the shortest sentence would be appropriate and when the longest one might be necessary.

Students may be asked to write other simple sentences and expand them in as many ways as they can. This activity will give students an opportunity to experiment with the uses of the different parts of speech and parts of a sentence.

2. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

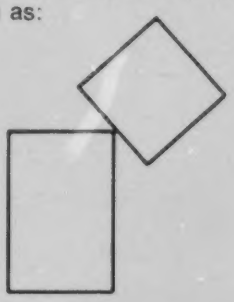
Building on the concept that parts of a sentence may be arranged in a variety of ways, ask the students to volunteer what they consider to be a good sentence. Write this on the chalkboard and ask students to restate the sentence in as many ways as possible. For example:

> The young student carrying an armload of books rushed madly up the school steps just as the tardy bell rang.
>
> Just as the tardy bell rang, the young student carrying an armload of books rushed madly up the school steps.
>
> Madly, the young student carrying an armload of books rushed up the school steps just as the tardy bell rang.
>
> Carrying an armload of books, the young student rushed madly up the school steps just as the tardy bell rang.

This activity will help students to realize that there are many different ways to say the same thing using the same words. Sometimes writers experiment with sentence arrangement in order to be certain they are saying what they want to say exactly the way they want to say it. **Word order adds clarity to a sentence, and using no more words than are necessary to convey the message adds conciseness. Clarity and conciseness are extremely important for good writing.**

3. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

This exercise not only helps students see the need for clear, short sentences arranged in a logical order, but it also tests their listening ability. Choose one of your more verbal students to lead this activity and give each student a sheet of paper. Give the leader a card or sheet of paper upon which geometric shapes are drawn, such as:



The leader does not permit anyone to see the drawing. He is instructed to help the class draw the shape by giving verbal directions, one line at a time.

He cannot say, "Draw a rectangle with the smaller lines at the top and bottom." Rather, he must say something like this, "Near the left edge of the paper draw a vertical line approximately two inches long." The instructions are given in similar fashion for each line in the drawing. If the leader has trouble trying to explain the attached square and its relationship to the rectangle, suggest that he might ask the class to think of their papers as maps with "north" being at the top. This way, lines could be given direction. When the instructions are completed, the students compare their drawings with each other's and then with the master drawing. It may be surprising how much variety there is in the final products.

Through this activity, students are helped to see the importance of clarity and logical order — as well as accurate listening. Many of them will have drawings which illustrate either poor directions on the part of the leader or poor listening on the part of the individual. Students may enjoy designing their own geometric shapes — not too complex — and writing instructions for reproducing them. Each student may exchange instructions with another student and each try to follow the other's directions. The results can be compared against the originals, and the pairs of students can discuss where the instructions may have been good or weak. Suggestions could also be made for approaching the problem differently. Students should see that building a sentence is like building a brick wall. Each brick is important and must be well placed if the wall is to be sturdy and useful. And each word in a sentence is important, for it too must be well placed if the sentence is to be sturdy and useful.

Depending on the diagnosis of student needs, you may plan other basic activities in sentence building such as working with parts of speech and phrases and clauses in constructing good sentences. Students should be encouraged to look for different ways of arranging sentence parts in their reading and writing. They will discover that there are many different ways of saying something, but clarity and conciseness are always important guidelines.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Students will be able to construct clear and concise sentences using the various parts of speech and parts of a sentence in a variety of ways to convey their message.

PARAGRAPH BUILDING

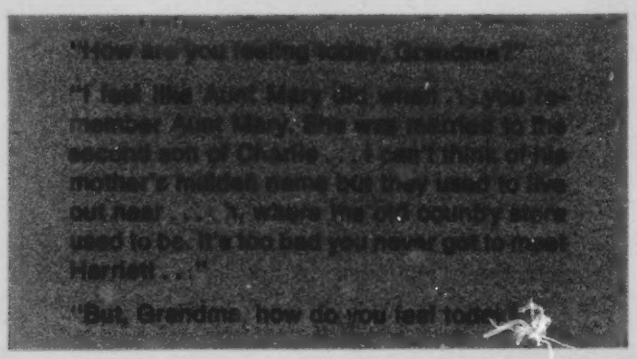
OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students improve basic skills in paragraph building.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

A good paragraph, like a good play, has an introduction, a body and a conclusion — all relating to one topic. The introduction is often the topic sentence, a statement of the paragraph's central idea. The body provides support for this central idea, and the conclusion is a summary or a final curtain on the idea.

Writing, like speaking, often rambles around a subject without really hitting at it, and students need to understand the need for well-written paragraphs, as well as to improve their skills in writing them. Perhaps you have experienced a conversation similar to this one:



This example is overdrawn, but it makes a case for unity and coherence.

1.

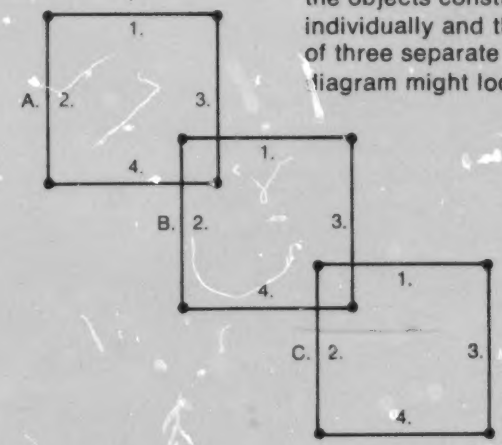
SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

With objects of various colors, clay, plastic shapes, colored straws, or scrap materials from the wood shop or home economics lab, the teacher can devise a construction activity to illustrate paragraph building. This activity is similar to the geometric drawing activity in sentence building. The class is divided into groups of four or five with one student in each group chosen as a leader. Each leader is given a diagram of a fairly complex structure that can be constructed from interlocking geometrical shapes of wood or scraps of fabric. Each group member is given several of the pieces necessary to complete the structure. Without sharing the diagram with the group and without pointing to or touching any of the pieces, the leader tells the group how to assemble the objects. For instance, "Mary, we need one of those six-inch strips of wood. John, we also need your small triangular block. Sue, will you nail the strip of wood to the short side of the triangle so that about four inches of the strip hangs over the edge nearest the hypotenuse?"

When the structures are completed, the construction process can be analyzed in several different ways. First, it can be seen as being similar to paragraph building. The diagram is the topic sentence — what the paragraph is all

about. Each of the pieces is a supporting detail to be worked into the paragraph. Each of the pieces or details is necessary to complete the object (paragraph), but they must be put together in a logical order to insure unity and coherence.

Second, the process may be seen as the building of an outline. The overall purpose is analyzed in terms of its major components, and the supporting details are added to each component. This analogy is especially effective if the objects constructed are made up of separate units which are made individually and then fit together. For instance, the object might consist of three separate but interlocking squares. In terms of an outline, the diagram might look something like this:



I. Total structure
  A. Square
    1. Side
    2. Side
    3. Side
    4. Side
  B. Square

I. Total outline section
  A. Major heading
    1. Supporting detail
    2. Supporting detail
    3. Supporting detail
    4. Supporting detail
  B. Major heading

2. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

The teacher shows the class a piece of fruit such as a pineapple and asks them to describe in a paragraph what it looks like, how it smells, tastes and feels. Before writing the description, the teacher circulates the fruit among the students, cuts it and distributes sections for examination and taste. Students then write their reactions. After the paragraphs are completed, they may be shared with the class. Students may select the best papers in this descriptive paragraph writing activity.

3. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Show the class a picture or photograph such as a record album cover which could tell a story. The story is to be considered as the topic of one paragraph. Ask students for the main idea of the picture. When this is agreed upon, ask for suggestions of topic sentences that express the idea. List these sentences on the chalkboard. When several have been listed, the students discuss them in terms of idea content, suitability and interest and then choose the best one.

Ask for suggestions in sentence form of other ideas which could be said about the picture; list these on the chalkboard. When several have been listed, review them with the class and ask which do not relate in any way to the topic sentence. As sentences are eliminated, erase them. Ask for other sentences which do relate to the topic sentence and describe the main idea of the picture. Analyze each of the sentences for clarity and conciseness as well as for its support of the topic sentence. Finally, the sentences are analyzed in terms of logical order, and the paragraph is rewritten

following student directions. This writing emphasizes the necessity of a good topic sentence, the idea that each sentence within a paragraph supports the topic sentence, and the concepts of clarity, conciseness and logic.

4. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Using an opaque projector or individual copies, share with the students six different paragraphs such as those which follow, illustrating the six main ways of developing a paragraph: cause and effect, comparison, contrast, detail, examples and proof. Help the class to analyze these paragraphs. Possible questions to be asked during the analysis include:

What is the topic sentence?

Where is it located?

Do all of the other sentences relate to and support it?

How was the idea of the topic sentence developed in the paragraph?

What transitional expressions were used to provide logic and clarity?

Sample paragraphs for analysis might include ones such as these:

1.

Hurricane Hattie raged up the Atlantic coast with winds gusting at over a hundred miles an hour. Because of her force, waves swept over exposed beaches, washing away the flimsy summer cottages and forcing holiday residents to flee.

2.

Shakespeare wrote three types of plays. There were, first, his histories, in which he related stories of several of the English kings. Another type was his famous tragedies, like *Macbeth*. In addition, he made Elizabethans laugh with the wit of his comedies.

3.

In his own day, Shakespeare was the most popular of playwrights and perhaps also the best paid, since he seems to have earned a considerable fortune. Then, in 1964, he seemed to be honored and loved even more than in his lifetime. The whole civilized world — not just his own little island — honored his four-hundredth birthday.

4.

Inside an Istanbul museum, visitors may see the sultan's Peacock Throne. Around it are cases filled with jewels, one of them an enormous emerald. Outside, however, human beasts of burden still bend under loads so big that the bearer can hardly be seen.

5.

Today men travel in many ways. Some travel by automobile and train. Others prefer to ride in airplanes and helicopters. Many still use primitive camel caravans and oxcarts. And a few have hurtled toward the stars in spaceships.

6.

Shakespeare was born in the English town of Stratford-on-Avon on April 16, 1564. For a few years he was a student in the local grammar school. At the age of eighteen he married Anne Hathaway. Several years later he went to London. By the time he was thirty-five, he was writing some of his great plays.

In addition to discovering the six methods of paragraph development, students will also discover that occasional use of transitional words and phrases lends unity, logic and clarity to a paragraph. Included among these are:

next	as a result	therefore
once again	finally	nevertheless
moreover	furthermore	for example
rarely	occasionally	

Finally, students will see that the topic sentence is not always found at the beginning of a paragraph, but may also come at the end or even in the middle.

Students may follow up on this activity by bringing to the class — from any source — what they consider to be a well-written paragraph. These paragraphs can be analyzed just as the sample paragraphs were.

5.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Further practice may be needed in the areas of topic sentence-paragraph development. Some ideas are to:

a. suggest broad subjects which the students can narrow to a paragraph topic and write a topic sentence; for example, extracurricular activities (subject), Pep Club (topic), "Pep Club has always been our school's most active organization." (topic sentence)

b. brainstorm topics for paragraphs and ask students to write paragraphs illustrating several methods of paragraph development such as cause and effect, detail or proof

c. write the sentences of a well-developed paragraph on slips of paper and insert in an envelope; ask students to put the scrambled sentences back in logical order

d. provide several examples of poorly constructed paragraphs, using transparencies or the chalkboard, and ask students to eliminate and rearrange sentences to form a good paragraph

e. provide several paragraphs which are well constructed except that they lack connectives and have students supply the connectives

f. have the students analyze explanations in science, social studies or mathematics textbooks in terms of clarity, conciseness, logic and interest.

At this point you may wish to introduce theme writing by relating the paragraph to the theme. Both have topic sentences, and a theme has a topic paragraph. Both are developed in numerous and similar ways, and both the paragraph and the theme have a conclusion or clincher.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Students will be able to choose a subject, narrow it to a topic, and write a well-developed paragraph which contains a good topic sentence, development through one or more of the six methods of paragraph development, and a logical conclusion.

OUTLINE BUILDING

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students improve basic skills in outline building.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

The ability to conceptualize an outline implies the ability to pick out main ideas and supporting ideas, to see relationships, and to understand the logical order of the topic. Outlining, either mentally or on paper, of written material promotes understanding of the content and provides a tool for easy review. Outlining a proposed project gives direction and helps clarify thinking. In writing, a well-planned outline will generally give an indication of paragraph sequence and structure and may give clues to good topic sentences.

Outlining is implicit and mandatory in every phase of the language arts — reading, writing, speaking and listening — if we are to be effective communicators. In reading and listening, we need to be able to distinguish main from supporting ideas. In writing and speaking, we need to be able to present our message in such a way that our audience can grasp the importance of what we have to say. Most of our outlining is done mentally, perhaps to a degree subconsciously. Working through and gaining an understanding of the written outline will help not only our written work but also every other phase of our communication.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Ask the students to think of something they know how to do — some skill they possess — which they would like to be able to demonstrate to someone else. This may be bowling, sewing, singing or any other area of interest. How would you demonstrate this skill so that someone unfamiliar with it would understand the steps involved? The teacher could choose some skill of his own to serve as an example and ask students who might be familiar with this skill to help identify the major steps. For example:

REFINISHING A CHAIR
selecting materials
removing old seat
stripping the wood
repairing and regluing
sanding
finishing the wood
recaning or reupholstering

Student suggestions for major steps are listed on the chalkboard and discussed. Any step which does not qualify as a major step — any one which could be included under another step — is eliminated, and the ones remaining are reordered in a logical way. Students are then helped to discover that, by adding Roman numerals, these steps become the major points of an outline. Each step can then be examined to determine supporting details which are denoted by capital letters.

Outlines can be composed of either complete sentences or phrases. If the outline is to be a formal one submitted as a proposal such as the cooperative project between the science and language arts teacher, it needs to be consistent — following one form or the other. However, if it is for personal

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use, it can take any form as long as the words are meaningful to the writer. Students may also wish to see what a skeleton outline form looks like. For general use, students will only need to deal with the first three or four levels.

I.

A.

B.

1.

2.

3.

a.

b.

(I.)

(II.)

etc.

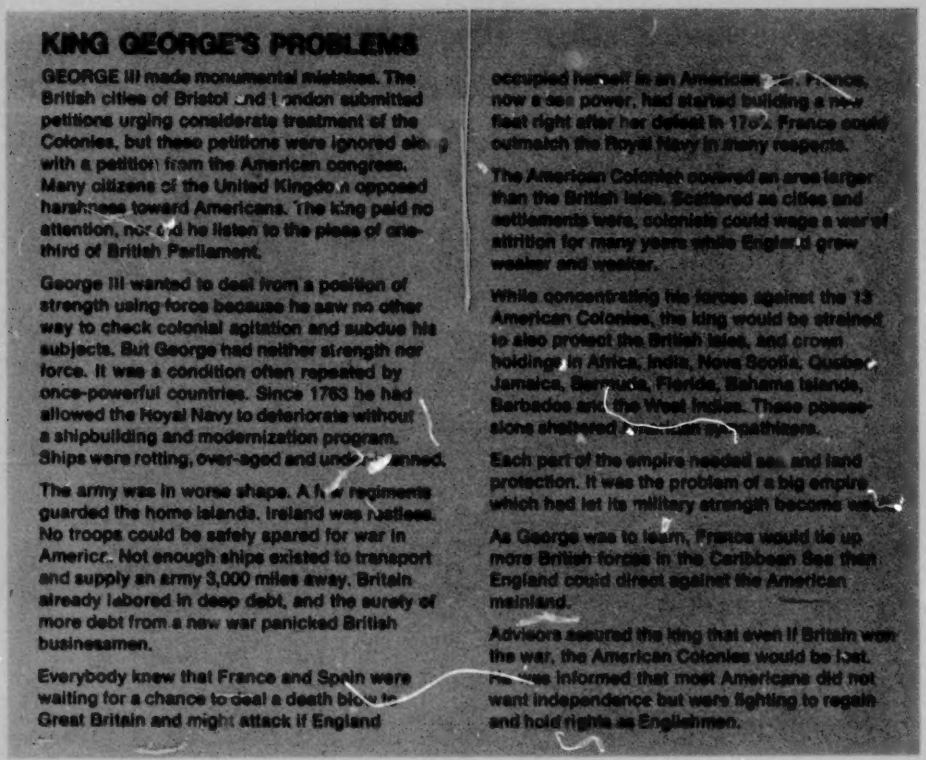
II.

Through the example provided on the chalkboard, students are helped to see how outlining helps to produce a logical order and to clarify thinking. The teacher may then demonstrate how a simple outline can be used as the basis for written work or oral presentations by using the outline on the chalkboard to give a demonstration speech. This speech is not a simple reading of the outline but rather an elaboration of the points listed.

Students are asked to prepare a similar outline for the topics they have chosen. The teacher acts as a resource to assist students in clarifying their thinking and placing the steps in logical order. As a follow-up to this activity, students may be asked to use their outlines to give speeches, or to write a description of the skill they have outlined. The outline gives direction to written work by indicating paragraphing (Roman numerals or capital letters, depending on the length and details of each). It is a tool to help the student, NOT a blueprint which must be adhered to.

2. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Using a section from a student textbook or the following excerpt, students can construct an outline of that section on the chalkboard. When the outline is completed, assist the students in discovering how this and similar outlines could be used as study tools. What would be some of the advantages and disadvantages of using outlines of textbook materials for study and review? The purpose of this activity is to help students discover that outlines can be useful study and review tools. If the following passage is used, students will have an opportunity to check their work against a suggested outline of the first few paragraphs.



KING GEORGE'S PROBLEMS

GEORGE III made monumental mistakes. The British cities of Bristol and London submitted petitions urging considerate treatment of the Colonies, but these petitions were ignored along with a petition from the American congress. Many citizens of the United Kingdom opposed harshness toward Americans. The king paid no attention, nor did he listen to the pleas of one-third of British Parliament.

George III wanted to deal from a position of strength using force because he saw no other way to check colonial agitation and subdue his subjects. But George had neither strength nor force. It was a condition often repeated by once-powerful countries. Since 1763 he had allowed the Royal Navy to deteriorate without a shipbuilding and modernization program. Ships were rotting, over-aged and under-manned.

The army was in worse shape. A few regiments guarded the home islands. Ireland was restless. No troops could be safely spared for war in America. Not enough ships existed to transport and supply an army 3,000 miles away. Britain already labored in deep debt, and the surety of more debt from a new war panicked British businessmen.

Everybody knew that France and Spain were waiting for a chance to deal a death blow to Great Britain and might attack if England occupied herself in an American war. France, now a sea power, had started building a new fleet right after her defeat in 1763. France could outmatch the Royal Navy in many respects.

The American Colonies covered an area larger than the British Isles. Scattered as cities and settlements were, colonists could wage a war of attrition for many years while England grew weaker and weaker.

While concentrating his forces against the 13 American Colonies, the king would be strained to also protect the British Isles, and crown holdings in Africa, India, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Jamaica, Bermuda, Florida, Bahama Islands, Barbados and the West Indies. These possessions sheltered [illegible] patriots.

Each part of the empire needed sea and land protection. It was the problem of a big empire which had let its military strength become weak.

As George was to learn, France would tie up more British forces in the Caribbean Sea than England could direct against the American mainland.

Advisors assured the king that even if Britain won the war, the American Colonies would be lost. He was informed that most Americans did not want independence but were fighting to regain and hold rights as Englishmen.

Signers of the Declaration of Independence, Ed Mason. Columbus: (The Dispatch Printing Company, 1975), p. 14.

An outline of the first several paragraphs of the preceding excerpt might look like this:

I. King George's Problems

A. George III's monumental mistakes
   1. Ignored petitions from Bristol and London urging considerate treatment of colonies
   2. Ignored petitions from American congress
   3. Ignored one-third of British Parliament

B. Wanted to use force
   1. Had no strength or force to use
   2. Since 1763 allowed Royal Navy to deteriorate
      a. No shipbuilding or modernization program
      b. Ships rotting, over-aged and under-manned

C. Army in worse shape

Similar activities can be related to other subject areas such as the science experiment or problem solving in a mathematics class.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Students will be able to employ outline building techniques both in written work and as a review/study tool in reading assignments.

THE LETTER

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students improve their skills in writing both personal and business letters.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

Prior to the invention of the telephone many years ago, writing letters was about the only means of communicating with others — except for talking with them face-to-face. With increased use of the telephone, letter writing declined. However, there are still many occasions when we would like to or need to communicate with a relative or friend by letter, and there are still many times when a business transaction can only be handled through a letter. Yet, because most of us write letters so infrequently, we get out of practice. How many times have we received a stuffy letter from a friend and thought it sounded like a business letter? And how many times have we written a business letter which just did not sound quite right to us?

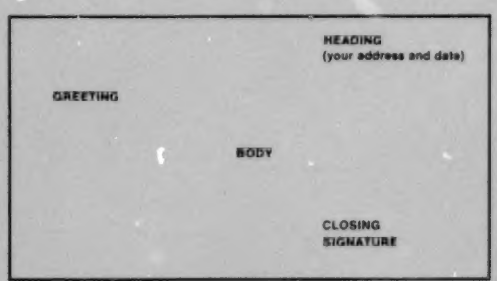
Personal letters are generally written to people we know — relatives or friends. These letters are informal and chatty, written as though we were talking face-to-face or on the telephone with a friend. Personal letters include thank-you notes and informal invitations as well as letters to tell friends about our personal activities and family news.

The business or formal letter should be clear, concise and definite. It is usually written with a specific purpose in mind to a person whom the writer does not know. Business letters deal with such matters as recommendations, introductions, requests for information, ordering merchandise, making applications, and registering complaints.

As with most other forms of writing, letter writing activities will be most beneficial to students if the letters are related to their everyday lives. Since personal letters *are* personal, little time will be spent with them.

I. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Review with students the standard format for personal letters. Students often do not see the need for including their own address on a letter written to a friend or relative. Help them to understand that this is done to facilitate a response. Even though the person knows the writer, he may not know or remember the address and would have to take the time to look it up. The standard format is:



Ask the students to give some reasons for writing personal letters. Possible responses might include:

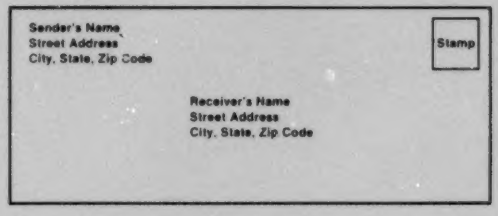
a. to thank someone for a gift
b. to invite friends to a party
c. to relate interesting things that have happened
d. to tell or ask about friends
e. to respond to someone else's letter

Discuss with the students the general tone of a personal letter. Help them to see that it can be light, humorous, newsy, sad, personal or chatty. In writing a personal letter, the writer keeps in mind the person to whom he is writing and tries to tell about things which will be of interest.

Ask each student to think of a friend or relative who attends another school — anywhere in the city, state or country — and to think of something they would like to ask or tell that person. Ideas might include how their school celebrated the bicentennial, how the school football team is doing, what kinds of writing they have done in their English classes, or what kind of foreign student program they have. The class decides on the item so that each student writes about the same general subject or topic.

The students are asked to write a letter to this friend. They may include any information they wish to make their letter as interesting as possible. One part of the letter may describe the letter-writing assignment. Assure the class that you will not read these letters (they *are* personal). Rather, ask the students to check their own letters for the heading, salutation, closing and signature.

When the letters are completed, encourage the students to mail them after reviewing the proper method of addressing an envelope.



After most of the students have received a response, the class could discuss the communications they received. It is generally more fun to receive a letter than to send one, but everyone knows that communication is a two-way process. After having received a letter from a friend or relative, the students may be enthusiastic enough to keep up the correspondence or to write other letters.

2. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Ask students to think about how they felt about themselves, others, or specific topics a month or two ago. Students may not wish to volunteer their personal thoughts, but they may be encouraged to state whether or not they can remember exactly what their feelings were at that time. In all probability, they will not be able to recall exactly. Ask the students how they feel right now about themselves or their position in relation to other people and things. Are they angry? Happy? Excited? Afraid? What has occurred or what are they anticipating which has made them feel the way they do right now? These questions are not for sharing in a class discussion but rather are stimulators to help each student reflect on his present feelings.

Encourage the students to compose letters to themselves in which they state as specifically as possible their present feelings, the possible causes for these feelings, and how they think their feelings might change in the next month or two. This letter is extremely personal, and students need to be guaranteed that no one, including the teacher, will read it. They must feel free to say whatever they would like to say.

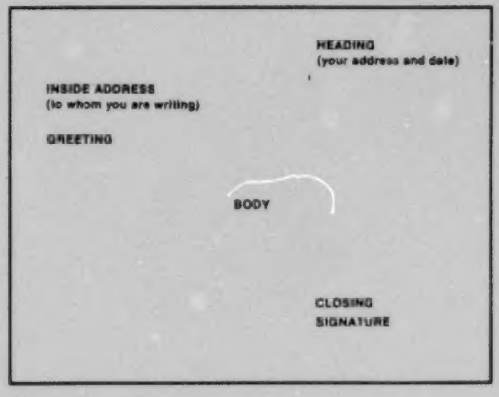
In writing this letter, students should practice the principles of good paragraphing. If they are dealing with more than one feeling, each feeling might be the topic of one paragraph. The remainder of each paragraph would deal with the possible causes of that feeling. Give each student an envelope which he will address to himself. The completed letter will be placed in the envelope and sealed by the student. The letters of all students are then sealed in a box which is kept in full view of the classroom. After a month or two, unseal the box and ask the writers to retrieve their letters. Follow-up discussion may be based on how accurately the students projected a change in feelings.

3.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Ask the students what the characteristics of a good business letter are. Help them to realize that:

- a business letter is more formal than a personal letter
- the receiver of a business letter may not be known to the writer
- the business letter is concise and clear
- the business letter is direct and to the point
- all facts are included in a business letter
- a business letter is courteous
- a business letter contains an inside address, especially when addressed to an office which receives a large volume of mail
- a business letter uses plain, simple language rather than slang
- a business letter looks like this:



Ask students what some of the reasons might be for writing a business letter. Possible responses include:

a. to request information
b. to ask for a job
c. to register a complaint
d. to recommend someone
e. to introduce someone
f. to order something

Provide the students with the names of local companies or industries — employers of fairly large numbers of people — or have students find these in the yellow pages of the telephone directory. Do not overlook school boards and government agencies. Ask each student to choose one of the names and check it off so that each student has a different name. Students could choose an employer from a field in which they have a specific interest. Tell the students that, while you have been trying to help them see the necessity of functional writing skills, you would like them to find out how employers feel about the ability to write. Ask students what kinds of information they feel would be useful. Possible items might be:

a. the importance of writing ability for the different job classifications within the company

b. whether or not the company conducts seminars to help its employees improve writing skills

c. how an employer reacts to a poorly or improperly completed application form

d. sample copies of the application form

e. what an employer looks for when hiring a person for a specific job

Ask each student to draft a letter to the business he has chosen. You might provide assistance, if necessary, in locating addresses and deciding to whom the letter should be addressed (personnel manager, etc.). Suggest that the students identify themselves and the nature of the project such as: "I am an eleventh grade student at _____ High School in _____ Our English 11 class is studying . . ." Also, ask that each student request five or ten copies of the company's application form. These will be used in a later section.

When drafts are completed, encourage students to edit and polish for conciseness, better word and sentence arrangement, and ideas and to proofread for grammatical errors, punctuation and spelling. Then ask the students to type or rewrite their letters legibly in ink and to mail them.

After students have received a response, ask them to share their replies with the class. These can provide the basis for a discussion on the necessity of functional writing skills and will give credence to the points you have been trying to make. You may wish to discuss at this point the application forms in terms of those sections which require more than statistical information, or you may wish to delay that discussion until you study the completion of application forms.

4. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Bring to class, or ask students to bring, the classified section from the Sunday editions of several large city newspapers. Suggest that the students review these sections and choose an advertisement for a job they would like to have. This can be any type of job with any type of qualifications. The important point is that the ad calls for a written response. Ask students to write a business letter applying for the job. The letter needs to be in good business form and include answers to all of the information requested in the ad.

Students often enjoy this writing because it gives them a chance to indulge their fantasies. They can apply to be anything they want to be. They can make up any background or qualifications the ad requires. However, it is important that the students realize that, when they really do apply for a job, they must be totally honest and straightforward in stating their qualifications and limitations. If any of your students really are looking for a job and can find an appropriate ad in a local paper, they may substitute that for the fictionalized letter.

When students finish their letters, ask them to share both the ad and the letter with you or a small group. Discuss the letters in terms of format, clarity and conciseness. Students may be asked to indicate where each point in the ad is addressed in the letter, why specific information was included, how the information documents the qualifications for the job, and so forth. Help students to discover where sentences could be shortened or made more clear, and where paragraphs might be strengthened. Help students to discover that all they need to do is state a fact simply and straightforwardly without surrounding it with empty words. Even in a fantasized letter, encourage students to be honest without going overboard in stating their abilities. Rather than "My typing speed is good (55 wpm), and I'm great at shorthand (120 wpm)," it would be much more effective to state simply, "My typing and shorthand speeds are 55 and 120 wpm, respectively." The employer will know whether or not these are good. Help the student to overcome chattiness in this type of letter without becoming stilted. Students may wish to develop a checklist which they could apply to letters of application which they may need to write. Possible items include:

(1) Is the letter in proper business letter form?

(2) Is the writing legible?

(3) Are all words spelled correctly?

(4) Is all information correct and factual?

(5) Are all sentences complete and paragraphs unified?

(6) Are all points in the ad addressed in the letter?

(7) Have unnecessary words and sentences been removed?

(8) Are sentences straightforward and to the point?

(9) If references are included, have these people been contacted?

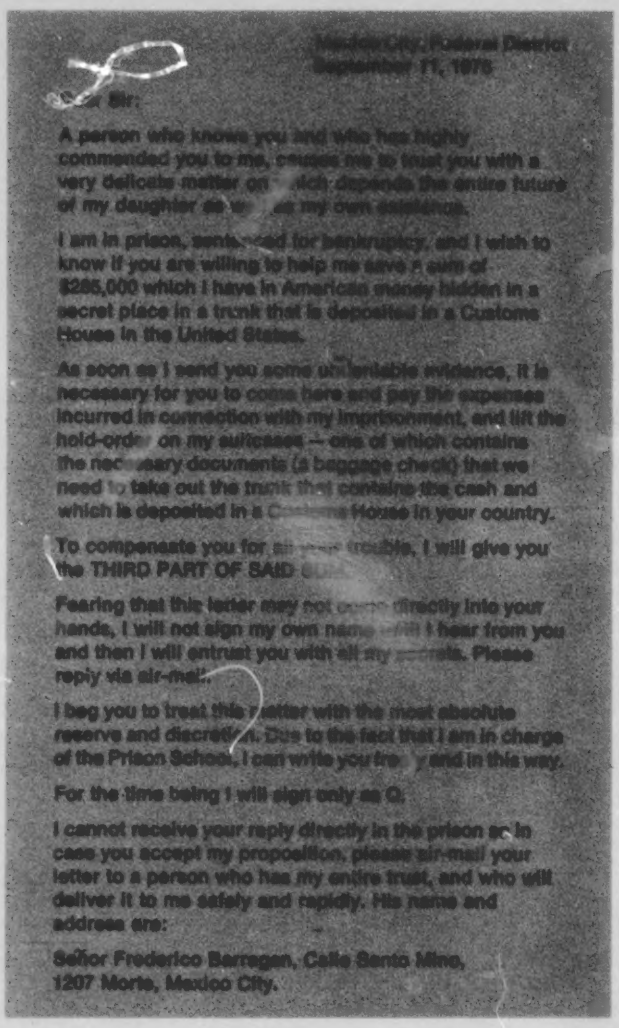
5.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Distribute copies of the following page (Assignment Sheet) to your students and ask them to read and respond to it without discussion. When the assignment is completed, discuss with the class the "fast buck" philosophy. The United States Postal Service and local banks can give you information on how millions of dollars are bilked each year through the use of this type of letter (known as the Spanish Swindle letter) and other "get-rich-quick" schemes. It will be interesting to see how many of your students were caught up in the swindle and to examine the reasoning of those who were and were not. However, in the excitement of the discussion, do not overlook discussing the actual format of the student letters of reply.

ASSIGNMENT SHEET

The following is a copy of an actual letter. Read it as though it had been addressed to you. Consider also that you are of moderate means, you pay your bills more or less promptly, you have a recent station wagon, you love your wife (or husband), you have two darling children, and you have $10,000 in the bank which you have saved by hard work and a little assistance of $9,950 from an inheritance from your great-great-grandmother . . .
You have received the following letter:



Mexico City, Federal District
September 11, 1975

Dear Sir:

A person who knows you and who has highly commended you to me, causes me to trust you with a very delicate matter on which depends the entire future of my daughter as well as my own existence.

I am in prison, sentenced for bankruptcy, and I wish to know if you are willing to help me save a sum of $285,000 which I have in American money hidden in a secret place in a trunk that is deposited in a Customs House in the United States.

As soon as I send you some unmistakable evidence, it is necessary for you to come here and pay the expenses incurred in connection with my imprisonment, and lift the hold-order on my suitcases — one of which contains the necessary documents (a baggage check) that we need to take out the trunk that contains the cash and which is deposited in a Customs House in your country.

To compensate you for your trouble, I will give you the THIRD PART OF SAID SUM.

Fearing that this letter may not come directly into your hands, I will not sign my own name until I hear from you and then I will entrust you with all my secrets. Please reply via air-mail.

I beg you to treat this matter with the most absolute reserve and discretion. Due to the fact that I am in charge of the Prison School, I can write you freely and in this way.

For the time being I will sign only as Q.

I cannot receive your reply directly in the prison so in case you accept my proposition, please air-mail your letter to a person who has my entire trust, and who will deliver it to me safely and rapidly. His name and address are:

Señor Frederico Barragan, Calle Santo Mino,
1207 Morte, Mexico City.

Assignment: After carefully considering the matter, you are to write a business letter to Señor Barragan expressing interest in the project or rejecting it. Then, on a separate page, write a well constructed paragraph on why you do not wish to pursue the matter further, or why you are proceeding — including some precautions you might take.

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6.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

If your students need more practice in writing either personal or business letters, consider returning to letter writing from time to time throughout the year with some of the following activities as reinforcement. Try to make each experience relevant to student needs.

a. Imagine that an article you ordered was received in damaged condition. Write only the body of a letter in which you politely explain your dissatisfaction and how you would like the problem to be corrected.

b. Imagine that you are writing your first letter to an overseas student. Outline the topics which you would like to cover and then follow the outline in writing the body of the letter.

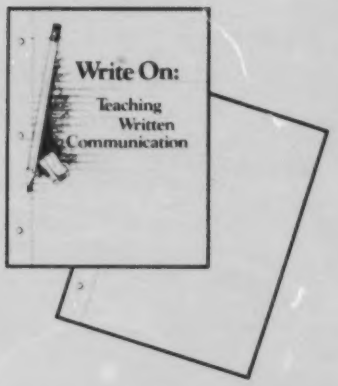
c. Write a thank-you note to a relative for a gift you received which you didn't want or which didn't fit.

d. Write a letter inviting a friend to a party you are planning. Be sure to include all of the necessary information.

e. Write a letter to a school or an employer recommending your best friend for acceptance or employment.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Students will be able to write appropriate personal and business letters, taking into consideration the different characteristics of each type of letter.



APPLICATION FORMS

OBJECTIVE

To enable teachers to help students identify and improve the skills necessary to complete various types of application forms.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

All of us at one time or another find it necessary to complete application forms — for college and other training admissions, driver's licenses, credit cards, bank accounts, loans, and probably most important, employment. Application forms are sometimes complex and involved. The wording may appear vague and confusing. However, the applicant learns that the information requested has particular meaning to the situation.

The importance of application forms to the reviewer varies with the purpose for which the information is intended. For instance, those reviewing credit and loan applications look most seriously at the applicant's history of employment, credit rating and stability in order to determine the risk factor involved. Reviewers of driver's license applications look especially at the date of birth and for an accurate record of statistical information. Application reviewers in education and employment construct success indicators not only from the applicant's qualifications but also from the manner in which the application is completed. These indicators may help or hinder that person in being accepted by the school or hired by the company.

An applicant is best represented by providing an application which contains complete information, good language use and correctly spelled words. Therefore, a beneficial use of time may be to study various types of application forms and to assist students in completing some of them. You may already have a file of forms from various companies — obtained during the lessons on business letters. For additional practice, however, you or some of your students may wish to request other forms from colleges, technical institutions, or banks.

1. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Ask students what types of application forms they have completed in the past, and list these on the chalkboard. Expand the list by adding other types of applications which students anticipate completing in the future. For example, included among this list might be applications for scholarships, summer jobs, driver's licenses and bicycle licenses. Help students to group these into major categories such as education, employment, credit, membership, and others. You may wish to place a chart on the chalkboard to assist the discussion.

TYPE	IMPORTANT INFORMATION
credit	employment history credit rating other indebtedness stability etc.

Help the class complete the chart by discussing what types of information would seem to be the most important for each type of application. Emphasize that the form in which the information is stated is nearly as important as the

actual information requested. Generally, these would fall into the education, employment and membership categories whose application forms often contain questions requiring explanations and/or descriptions. Examples might be: "Describe how you think your abilities would be of benefit to our company" or "Explain your ultimate goal in furthering your education."

The students are helped to discover that completing questions such as these is similar to writing a formal essay. The answers are based on the opinion of the applicant. They are formal, concise and to the point.
Students are helped to discover, too, the importance of gathering accurate personal data before completing an application blank.

Give all students a copy of the same application form which they may read and complete. Then discuss this common experience. Next, distribute several application forms to each student, or ask students to bring in forms for situations in which they have a particular interest or need. Try to see that each student has a variety of types. Give the students a few minutes to review the forms and ask any questions. Then ask them to share some of the "essay" questions which their applications include. These may be discussed in light of the type of application and possible uses to be made of the form itself.

Ask each student to complete two or three application forms. Since these are of a personal nature, students may wish to fictionalize all of the information but their names. The important factor is giving students the opportunity to complete various types of forms. However, it is also important to stress the necessity of absolute honesty when completing application forms in real-life situations. When the forms are completed, students may work individually with the teacher or in small groups to discuss any problems encountered.

If references are required on any of the applications, students may need to discuss how this is handled. Those who know the applicant best (outside of the immediate family) may include teachers, clergymen, former employers or close family friends. These people are asked, either personally or by letter, if their names may be submitted as references. A letter states simply that the applicant is applying for a specific position with a specific company or school and would like to use this person as a reference. Points included in a verbal or written request might include:

> May I use your name as a reference?
>
> Would you be willing to complete a form or write a letter? (Be sure to provide the form or the name and address to whom a letter is to be written.)
>
> Would you mail the letter or form directly to the school or company requesting the recommendation?
>
> I appreciate your willingness to provide this recommendation.

Through the preceding discussion, students may design a checklist to be used when completing applications. This checklist could be copied by each student for future use and might include questions such as:

(1) Are all questions completed?

(2) Are the responses legible?

(3) Is all spelling correct?

(4) Is all statistical information accurate?

(5) Are the responses concise?

(6) Do the responses correspond to the requested information?

(7) Have all references given permission for their names to be used?

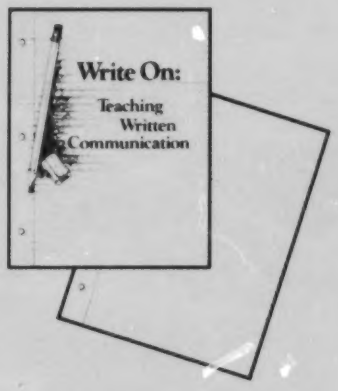
(8) Are responses stated in a positive manner?

(9) Others?

The activity may be extended by role-playing situations between an applicant and an admissions officer, a personnel officer, a membership selection committee, and so on, reviewing a completed application form. This could follow discussion on the interview situation and the importance of making a good impression through personal appearance. The students might also wish to invite an admissions officer or personnel manager to their class to discuss both the application form and the personal interview. Students may also wish to design their own application forms for fictitious companies.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Students will be able to complete a variety of types of application forms accurately, writing clear and concise responses to all questions.



NEWS AND REPORT WRITING

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students obtain and improve those skills necessary for good news and report writing.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

What characterizes a well-written news article? How is it distinguished from a poorly written one? What is the purpose of writing reports or news articles? Although these two types of writing can be and often are very different, their main purpose is the same — to inform the reader. **With this in mind, good news writing and report writing emphasize facts and explanations while excluding opinions as much as possible.** This is the difference between biased and unbiased writing. The unbiased writer will inform the reader of the facts and permit the reader to draw his own conclusions and form his own opinions. However, writers with hidden agendas or vested interests will either overtly or covertly manipulate their use of words and facts in an effort to sway reader opinion.

One of the keys to good news and report writing is organization. Whether for a corporation's lengthy annual report to stockholders or for a relatively short news article, the writer must have either a mental or written outline in order to present the facts in a logical, concise and clear manner in an effort to inform the reader, not confuse him. The "who-what-why-when-where-how" normally associated with journalism really applies to both types of writing. Well-written news articles generally present the who, what, when and where in the first sentence or two and devote the remainder of the article to explanation — the why and how. And, although reports of any nature are usually much longer than a news article, the same general format is followed. A general statement is made at the beginning about the who, what and when, and the bulk of the report deals with the why and how. However, reports do not just end as news articles generally do. They are concluded with a summary.

Here, then, are the two major concepts to be presented in this section: writing in a factual, unbiased manner and presenting the who-what-why-when-where-how in a logical, concise and clear way.

I. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Using transparencies, show the class the opening paragraph or two of several recent news articles from your local paper and note what information is included in each opening paragraph. Taking each article separately, list the information on the chalkboard. Using the first sections of the following article, the information may be listed as shown.

Influenza Shots Are Suggested

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Persons over 50 years of age probably should receive swine flu shots before next fall although many of them already have a degree of immunity against the virus.

"We have no evidence the pre-existing antibodies people over 50 have will protect them," Dr. David Sencer, director of the government's Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, told a Senate appropriations subcommittee Tuesday.

THE ONLY AGE GROUP likely to be exempt from immunization in the government's program, he said, is very young children.

a. persons over age 50
b. Probably should receive
c. swine flu shots
d. before next fall
e. Washington

By locating information in this manner, students will conclude that the opening of a news article usually tells who, what, why, when and where. The uniformity of this format may be checked by students by reviewing copies of newspapers they have brought to class. (NOTE: Some newspaper offices are willing to donate sufficient copies of their paper for each student and may continue to do so for a week or more.) By reading the remainder of each article, students will discover that the writers explain the why and how of the topic, often sequentially. Through this activity, students will discover the purpose of writing news articles — to inform the reader by presenting facts and explanations.

If you can obtain copies of annual reports from several corporations or boards of education, you can conduct the same activity with the opening paragraphs and then allow students an opportunity to read through the remainder of the reports to see how information and facts are presented in a logical order. Call attention, too, to the conclusion or summary of these reports.

Ask students to brainstorm recent events which have happened in their school or community as a student secretary lists these on the chalkboard. Then, interest students in writing the opening sentence of a news article about one or more of these events. When this writing is completed, encourage students to share their sentences in small groups of four or five. Ask students to analyze the sentences in terms of how concisely and clearly the who-what-when-why-where are presented. The students may select sentences from their groups to be shared with the class as models.

2. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Using the lead sentences from the preceding activity, the students could write a news article which would be appropriate for publication in either the school or local newspaper. The lead sentences can be changed to correspond to school and community activities. Students evaluate their news articles to determine if they inform the reader through the presentation of facts and explanations in a logical, clear and concise manner.

When the articles are completed, again review with students several news articles from your local newspaper, ones which you consider to be well written. Help students discover that paragraphs in professionally written news articles are often no more than one or two sentences long. This is done both for ease in reading and because each paragraph usually presents one fact or point with only that explanation which is absolutely necessary to clarify the fact. This is a good time, too, to help students discover that opinions of the subject are sometimes included in news articles and that this is fine so long as the opinions are documented as such.

Ask students to review their articles in terms of paragraphing and also to make certain that facts are presented as facts, and opinions are documented as such. When the articles have been revised, they can be shared in small groups as well as with the entire class. Students who wrote on the same topic might find it especially helpful to share their writing with each other in order to compare the facts and opinions reported. Individual students or small groups may try to decide on appropriate headlines for each article. Because of press deadlines, student articles would probably be too outdated to submit to a local newspaper, but any or all of them could be submitted to the school paper.

3.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Save your newspapers for a week or two. Also obtain current issues of national news magazines. Locate articles which have been reported both in the newspaper and in one or more magazines. Try to find enough of these so that each group of three to five students can have a separate set of both the newspaper and magazine articles. The same story may be reported in two or three magazines. Students could also be asked to collect newspapers and magazines and to find articles on a certain issue or current event.

Divide the class into groups of three to five students, and give each group a set of articles. Ask them to read these and analyze them in terms of:

(1) how the newspaper article differs from the magazine report,

(2) how the magazine articles differ from each other,

(3) whether or not the opening paragraphs present the who-what-when-where-why,

(4) whether or not all facts are presented as facts and are consistent among articles,

(5) whether or not opinions are presented as such in one article and as facts in another, and

(6) whether or not all facts are documented and explained.

This is a challenging assignment calling for good judgment and keen insight. The learning processes involved are comparing and contrasting. When each group has completed this activity, a spokesman may generalize the group's findings for the class. This will provide a good introduction for reading a news article and what to look for in biased reporting. From their reading, students can create lists of words on the chalkboard which might signal both fact and opinion. Words listed under "Fact" might include: swears, pledges, avows, cites, acknowledges, and states. Under "Opinion" might be: surmises, theorizes, believes, thinks, feels, guesses, supposes, hopes, and contends.

Either during or after the compilation of these lists, students may discuss the idea that what is reported as fact **may** really be opinion and what is cited as an opinion **may** be factual. Sometimes there is no way for readers to differentiate, and they must rely on their own experiences to form opinions. The point of this activity is to heighten student awareness of the differences in journalistic reporting and to stress the idea that they do not have to believe everything they read, even if it is reported as fact.

Students may wish to conclude this activity by discussing why reporting is sometimes biased. Possible reasons might include political pressures, altering opinions, or building images. After this discussion, students may enjoy choosing a topic of particular interest to them — a recent event — and writing a biased news article about it. For example, after the conclusion of a losing season, an article might be "Our Basketball Team Best in State" in which a student could present the "facts" behind the team's losing season such as poor refereeing or unsportsmanlike conduct of other teams. Students are reminded that these are "news" articles, and news articles present facts. Therefore, those events or opinions related to the topic are presented in a convincing way as factual material.

When the articles are completed, students may share them in small groups and give the group members a chance to challenge the "facts" and uncover the truth behind the reporting. Since all students know that the articles are intended to be biased, there is no threat to the students in having their "faults" uncovered. However, the activity will help students to realize that critical thinking is needed for reading print material. This is another important learning process.

4. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

As a follow-up to, or in conjunction with, activities on biased reporting, you may wish to include a study of headlines or article captions. Using copies of the current local newspaper, students may be asked to read different sections and look for headlines which they do not feel accurately represent the entire thrust of the accompanying article. These may be shared with the class, either orally or by using an opaque projector. Students may wish to discuss why they think the particular headline was chosen and may also suggest an alternative which would more accurately reflect the content of the article. Through this activity, students will see how reporters often isolate the sensational out of proportion, giving a false slant to a news story.

5. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Students are asked to give some reasons for writing a report or to cite the types of reports they have written in the past. Possible responses include:

(1) book report
(2) lab (science) report
(3) report on a historical event
(4) club treasurer's report
(5) club chairman's report

Ask the students how these different types of reports are similar. Help them to realize that they first must do something — read a book, conduct an experiment, balance accounts — and then present their findings (facts) and explanations. For instance, a treasurer's report might begin, "The balance in the Spanish Club account as of March 15, 1976, is $23.20. During the past month our expenditures totaled $17.53 while our receipts amounted to $31.50 . . ."

Students then compare reports to news articles. The students discover that both types of writing are basically a presentation of facts and explanations. However, reports often allow room for interpretations and opinions. For instance, a part of many book reports deals with the reader's reaction (opinion) to the book or a particular aspect of it. A club chairman's report might deal with the very successful (opinion?) fund raising event which took place or the dull (opinion?) conference the chairman attended. A lab report might state that, because two elements reacted in a certain way under one set of conditions, the experimenter hypothesizes (opinion?) they would react in another way under different conditions.

Students are helped to discover that, since reports are based on facts and explanations, it is important that they be clear, concise and logical — just like news articles. And, reports also contain the who-what-when-where-why, perhaps not all in the opening sentence but surely in the opening paragraph.

Reports state facts, then explain or support them, and finally – a step which most news articles do not include – they summarize.

If students have written any type of report, or if they can obtain a copy of a report someone else has written, they may be asked to bring these to class. The reports can be analyzed in terms of clarity, conciseness and logic, and students may be asked to rewrite them in what they consider to be better form. This may be done either individually or in small groups as practice in employing the skills of good reporting.

6.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Either in conjunction with a social studies class or as an English class activity, students could attend a meeting of the school board, city council, League of Women Voters, or some other organized group. The purpose of attending such a meeting would be to take notes on the proceedings in order to write both a news article and a report. Therefore, it may be wise to review note-taking skills with the students. These might include writing concise but accurate notes, and accuracy in quoting (both who and what).

After the meeting, students may compile their notes and write a news article about the meeting as it might appear in the local newspaper. These articles may be shared in small groups, especially among students who may have attended the same meeting, to compare accuracy in reporting, to uncover possible biases, and to compare formats. Based on these sharing experiences, students may wish to revise their news articles.

After reviewing the differences and similarities between news articles and reports, you may ask students to write a report of the same meeting as they would write it for presentation to a group. For instance, they may have been asked by the student council president to attend the school board meeting and report back to the council. Through this activity, students will gain both an understanding of and practice in writing news articles and reports.

7.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

The concepts of news and report writing can be expanded in many ways. The class may invite a practicing news reporter from the local newspaper to visit the class to discuss necessary educational background, job opportunities, information gathering and reporting procedures. The class may also arrange a tour of the local newspaper facility to include informal meetings with people who do different types of writing for the newspaper.

This activity can also be expanded to studying the various types of writing which appear in newspapers, giving students an opportunity to study and practice writing those types which interest them, and producing a class newspaper complete with news articles, editorials (essays), sports news, cartoons, advertising and graphics. Applications of this nature give students the satisfaction of seeing their own words in print and may encourage them to submit more of their writing for publication in school or local newspapers and other sources.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Students will be able to distinguish a news article from a report and biased from unbiased writing and to employ their knowledge of these concepts plus the generally accepted formats to write their own news articles and reports.

ESSAY TESTS

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students sharpen their skills in answering essay questions by reviewing the definitions and functions of terms and practicing good paragraph writing in a formal essay situation.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

Although it is true that single answer, fill-in-the blank tests are much easier and quicker to evaluate, it is also true that **those tests which are most useful in helping students to develop their thinking processes and to put their learning to use are the essay type.** Questions which ask students to explain, describe, compare and contrast help them to see relationships and bring isolated facts into meaningful combinations. And teachers, too, are given the opportunity to evaluate broad thinking rather than the rightness or wrongness of single word responses. But students will not be able to answer essay questions if they are not adequately prepared to think in these ways.

It is up to the teachers — not just the language arts teacher but all teachers — to present subject matter in terms of relationships and understandings and to help students comprehend the material in this way. It may be helpful to define "molecule" or to know what happened in 1492 or to be able to distinguish a noun from a verb. But what do all of these things mean? What can we do with them? How can we apply them in other meaningful situations? What is the carry-over value so that, if we cannot remember the precise definition of a word or a specific date, the generalized knowledge which we have retained will still be useful to us?

By the time a student leaves your class or the school or reaches a particular age, specific facts may not be at all relevant. But, if we have helped our students to expand and mature their thinking processes, we will have helped them to become better communicators. All teachers should be involved in this process; language arts teachers must be.

1.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Most students are able to define words such as compare, contrast, explain and define, but they may not know how to apply these activities in writing. Here is a class project that uses comparison, contrast, explanation and definitions. Ask students to suggest two ideas or objects which are somewhat related. Examples might include:

a saxophone and a trumpet
a baseball and a basketball
a car and a truck
truth and honesty
a canoe and a rowboat

Choose one pair of the student suggestions as an example. Ask students to define each word, and list the definitions on the chalkboard. For instance:

saxophone — a keyed woodwind instrument with a single reed and a metal body

trumpet — a valved brass instrument made entirely of metal

When simple definitions have been agreed upon, ask students to explain the chosen terms. Thus, a saxophone might be explained as a brass musical

instrument with ten keys, a plastic mouthpiece and a single reed, played by blowing into the mouthpiece and manipulating the keys. A trumpet is a brass musical instrument with three keyed valves and a metal mouthpiece, played by blowing into the mouthpiece and manipulating the keyed valves.

Finally, when explanations have been agreed upon, ask the students to compare and contrast the two terms. Through this exercise, students will see that, in order to compare and contrast, they need to gather and sort out all information they have and organize it in a meaningful fashion. Therefore, using the same examples, the comparison and contrast could be made as follows:

saxophone		trumpet
musical instrument	+	musical instrument
10 keys	—	3 keyed valves
single reed	—	no reed
plastic mouthpiece	—	metal mouthpiece
wind instrument	+	wind instrument

Comparisons and contrasts can also be made in narrative fashion such as: "A saxaphone and trumpet are alike in that they are both brass wind musical instruments. They differ in that the saxophone has a plastic mouthpiece and a single reed and is played by blowing into the mouthpiece and manipulating ten keys while a trumpet is played by blowing into the metal mouthpiece and manipulating three keyed valves."

By working their way through these processes, students will come to a better understanding of what the terms mean as well as how to employ the operations they imply. Students can choose two terms of their own to develop them through the same processes in order to reinforce the learning acquired in the total class activity. Students may wish to work in pairs or groups for this exercise. By completing this activity, students are helped to see that, in employing any of the four operations, it is necessary for them to gather or recall information and to organize this information in a logical way.

2. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Teachers in other subject areas may be asked to contribute several essay questions covering materials with which the students are already familiar. Along with your own contributions, these questions may be listed on the chalkboard and the students asked to organize themselves into small groups of 3-5 according to which question they would like to answer. Each small group could then collaborate on a good answer, employing the techniques of collecting pertinent information, separating fact from opinion, separating main facts from support details, forming generalizations, and organizing the information in a logical and concise manner. The teacher may act as a consultant to help students with difficulties.

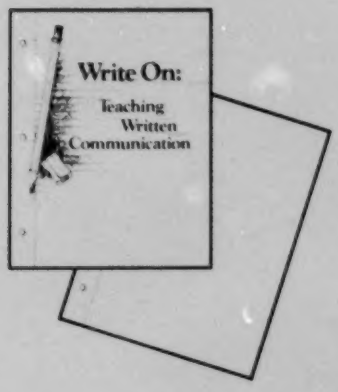
Each teacher who contributes questions could also be asked for an outline of the information which would be necessary to answer the question well. As each group of students completes its answer, the group could check the answer against the teacher's outline to see how well they have collected pertinent information. They may rewrite their responses if they wish. Responses need to be organized as good paragraphs are organized — with a topic sentence followed by supporting sentences related to the topic. Does

the topic sentence effectively state the theme of the paragraph? Does it relate to the information requested in the question? Do all other sentences relate to and support the topic sentence? Are all sentences clear and concise? Do all paragraphs relate to each other and to the question? These are a few guideposts students can use to check the structure of their answers.

This exercise will give students an opportunity to employ some of the terms generally used in essay questions in a somewhat realistic situation and to check their responses against what their teachers consider to be good ones. Students will discover that good answers to essay questions present pertinent facts and necessary explanations in a logical way. The answers need not be long in order to be complete. And, if the essay question asks for an opinion or belief, this is handled in the same straightforward manner as factual information. For example, a question might ask the students to define "capital punishment" and state their opinion of it. An appropriate response might be: "Capital punishment involves putting to death a person convicted of specific crimes such as murder. I am a pacifist and am, therefore, opposed to any form of violence." Writing essay-responses to questions is just like writing formal essays, a topic covered elsewhere in this book.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Given the opportunity in an actual testing situation, students will answer essay questions completely and accurately by organizing facts and explanations logically and presenting them in well-written paragraphs in the style of a formal essay.



THE RESEARCH PAPER

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students understand and practice those skills needed in writing a research paper.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

What is the purpose of assigning research papers in language arts classes? Perhaps we have not thought about the purpose recently. Perhaps "we've always done it that way." If we ponder the question, we will probably decide that there are important skills to be learned in research writing and, even more important, there are personal benefits for our students in the form of useful and relevant information, information which could be useful in any or all areas of learning. The most important skills to be learned do not necessarily include how to cite a direct quote, how to footnote, or how to write a bibliography. Granted, these and other similar mechanical skills have their place, but manuals can guide students through the mechanics. We need to provide them access to such style manuals and guidance in their use.

Our primary usefulness to our students comes from helping them to realize the potential personal benefits to be derived from research writing and to guide them through the steps of preparing a research paper:

- Identifying and narrowing a topic or proposing a thesis
- Identifying potential sources of information
- Conducting research and taking notes
  - Reviewing literature
  - Conducting surveys
  - Compiling information
- Organizing information
- Presenting findings
  - Stating thesis or topic
  - Presenting information
  - Stating conclusion or summary

Our role, then, is to act as stimulators, to unleash in our students a real desire to find out more about some topic which has specific interest and appeal for them, and to help them in the process of culling, synthesizing and interpreting what others have had to say about the topic. This means that such topics as "The Petrarchan Sonnet as an Art Form" or "The Society of Early New England Poets" may be overlooked by students in favor of more immediately relevant topics such as "Country Music as an Art Form" or "The Society of Motor Home Owners of the '70's." These latter topics may not fit into our literature programs, but they are more likely to turn students on to the values of research writing, and that is really our ultimate goal in this area of language arts. The learning to be derived is in the process itself.

In researching current topics, students may not be as likely to rely on encyclopedias, summary articles or synoptic books. But this has its advantages, for these types of documents actually encourage students to rearrange, reword or simply copy. By choosing current topics, not only will students rely more heavily on newspapers and magazines, but also they may have the opportunity to do some primary research such as interviewing country singers or motor home owners or writing to a congressman or talking with an expert in their particular field of interest. These topics, therefore, present more of an opportunity for creativity in the research process, and this may lead to more interest and enthusiasm on the part of the students and help to create a more lasting value.

1.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Ask the students why people engage in research. Some of the possible responses might include:

to satisfy personal curiosity
to gather information
to create better products
to solve a problem
to find new and better ways of doing things
to find out how to make or do something
to find new treatments and cures
to predict the future
to unlock the secrets of nature
to improve conditions

Follow this discussion by asking students what places come to mind when they think of research. The two most common answers will probably be a laboratory and a library. Help students to discover other places where research information can be gathered. Through this exploration, students will discover that the whole world may legitimately be called a library/laboratory. Depending on the particular area of interest, information can be found anywhere — on a street corner, in a store, on the telephone, through visits, films, records, resource persons, experimentation, and observation as well as a review of literature.

Ask students why they might want to do research, what topic or idea interests them enough that they would like to find out more about it. Students may need some time for this, but encourage each of them to choose one topic. When these topics are shared with the class, the teacher might need to help individual students narrow their topics. For instance, a student might state an interest in American sports which is an extremely broad topic. Even narrowing the topic to a specific sport or time period might still be too broad, but it is moving toward a more manageable size. A topic such as "American Sports Cars" might be narrowed to "American Sports Cars of the 1930's."

When students have narrowed their topics to a manageable size, they might wish to meet in small groups to discuss possible types and sources of information. The groups may be composed of students with somewhat similar topics, or they may be randomly organized, but students can benefit from sharing their thinking and ideas.

Students need to ask themselves what types of information they would like to find out about their topics. This may include any or all of the who-what-why-when-where-how series. What are the reasons for some particular action? What are the ideas or concepts behind something? How does it work or what happened? Is there a teacher on the staff who can be helpful in obtaining information or suggesting sources? Is there someone in the community who can be asked for specific help? Could the city or county historical society be helpful? Does the local newspaper have a library of press clippings? Does the county courthouse have records which might be helpful? Are there various people that could be interviewed, either in person or by letter?

Students will discover that these questions may lead to other sources. For instance, if their interest in the American sports car causes them to want to know which car was the most popular in their community in the 1930's, students will discover that they have to design a survey questionnaire.

During the small group discussions, the teacher moves from group to group, offering suggestions if any are needed. This may be a good time, too, to help students think through their topics as they would relate to the elements of most good research papers: hypothesis, developmental body, summary and conclusion.

Based on the direction individual students have decided to take in researching their topics, you may choose to work with the whole class or with small groups. For instance, probably all students will need to do some library research, so the teacher will choose to spend some time discussing how to take notes from library sources and how to document these sources. Here you may recommend research paper style manuals or obtain copies for each student so that a great amount of time is not spent on mechanics.

The type and extent of teacher involvement will depend on the students' individual needs. If several students are planning a survey questionnaire, you can help these students in writing questions. If several students want to use the resources of the historical society, you can assist in arranging their visit and assuring their access to pertinent information.

Students should be encouraged to gather as much information as possible about their chosen topic. At the time students feel they have obtained sufficient information, they need to sift through what they have gathered and put it in some order. This means first of all reviewing the original list of needed or desired information and cross-checking it with what they have collected. Are there areas where information is a little sketchy? Is more research needed in a particular area? Are there photographs which could be taken or charts, graphs, diagrams or maps which could make the paper more meaningful?

At this point, students need to begin their outlines. What is the most logical way this information can be presented so that it will make sense to both the writer and reader? The outline, too, may uncover areas where more research is needed. You must always be available to answer student questions, make suggestions, react to ideas or outlines.

When students are satisfied that they have collected all of the pertinent information and that their outlines give them clear direction, they are ready to begin writing. During the writing process, you can assist students in documenting sources and in compiling bibliographies. When the report is drafted, each individual student should review the draft with you in terms of its clarity, completeness and mechanical correctness. A constructive one-to-one conference review of the draft may be one of the more significant learning aspects of the entire research process.

Based on this conference, students prepare their final drafts. At this time, they may write an introduction/abstract of their papers. This could trace the origins of the student's interest in the particular topic, some of the research processes engaged in, and a summary of the more significant research findings. When completed, it could be used as the basis for an oral presentation of the research paper.

All students may be encouraged to present their introductions to the class. They may use any visuals they desire to illustrate their reports. Perhaps students will be willing to share their reports with the class. Their oral introductions can serve as attention- and interest-getters so that other students will want to read their papers. Students may also be interested in following

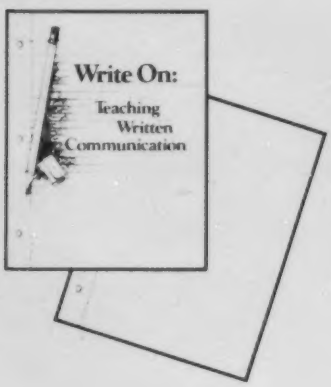
up on their own reports by giving demonstrations, creating bulletin board displays, constructing models, painting pictures and so forth. The extent of student follow-up may be a good measure of the success of this assignment.

Hopefully, the students will see the research process as one which will provide them with information useful to them, information they want to know.

The research and writing process can serve as a model for those times in the future when the students want to or need to find out specific information on any topic. However, a written paper is not always the logical outgrowth of research. Sometimes it may be a model or some other handcrafted item. Perhaps it will be an internal appreciation of an idea or concept.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Students will be able to research a specific topic of interest to them and present their findings.



INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING

INTEREST + EXPERIENCE + VOCABULARY = CREATIVITY

Our ultimate goal as language arts teachers is to help our students become better communicators through the development of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. In the area of writing, the functional writing skills will probably have the most lasting effect and utility for students. This is the type of writing which is most often stressed in our schools. But it is through creative writing skills that feelings of confidence and self-worth can more easily be attained, and these feelings will usually help to make the attainment of functional writing skills easier and more meaningful. One of the important roles of a teacher is to equip students with lasting life skills. In the study of creative writing, there is much in the area of personal guidance and growth to be dealt with, for a good self-concept will get students much farther in life than will a perfect knowledge of the rules of grammar.

What is creativity? Creativity is the ability to produce something original, to see new relationships, and to use imagination and inventiveness. Every person, it has been said, is creative; it is the degree of creativity which varies. From the formula "Interest + Experience + Vocabulary = Creativity," we can surmise that every student has some type of interest, some experience, and some form of vocabulary. The challenge to the language arts teacher, then, is to stimulate additional interest, to provide new and varied experiences, and to help build a strong vocabulary. All students have the potential to be creative writers if we can stimulate them enough to commit their thoughts to paper.

Probably one of the most important roles of a secondary language arts teacher is that of maintaining a classroom climate conducive to creativity. This can be done in many ways. All students must be made to feel and believe in their own worth — to realize that they have important contributions to make. Without this attitude, all other teacher effort is lost. A teacher's authentic trust and respect in students' ideas and questions creates the environment. Sometimes the nonconformists among our students are the most creative. If the teacher's acceptance is sincere and convincing, a rapport will be established between teacher and student which will encourage freedom of expression.

Creativity comes from within, but it can and often needs to be stimulated externally. **Creativity needs to be unleashed.** This idea often makes those of us whose training generally centered around rules, regulations, forms and functions uncomfortable. In our zeal to do what is right and to "prepare" our students, we too often teach as we were taught. The students need to know the rules, regulations, forms and functions, so we teach them first and then, if there is any time left, we try to force our students to write "within the mold."

Could it be that, if we can first stimulate our students to get their ideas on paper, they will become so interested in saying what they have to say in the best way possible that they will want to expand their vocabularies and use words more creatively and adopt some standards for capitalization and punctuation? Various studies have shown this concept to have validity. **If students realize that what they have to say is of primary importance and how they say it comes next, they are more likely to want to write. And when they are comfortable and convinced of the what, they may better accept the challenge of the how.**

Writing is a total language learning process. Writing cannot be a one-shot deal whereby we assign it, the student does it, we grade it, and the student files it away. Good teaching of writing skills is time-consuming.

The best types of feedback for the student are verbal communication on a one-to-one basis and friendly notes written on student papers. Early in the year most of the emphasis needs to be on what the student says. Comments such as these are usually encouraging:

> *Your idea is very good. How might we say this a little more forcefully?*
>
> *Are you saying what you really mean here? Let's take a look at it.*
>
> *What other words could we use here that might be more colorful or descriptive?*

If the student knows we accept the worth of his idea, constructive comments will usually be accepted gratefully. Some of the teacher's comments might also help the student to expand his vocabulary by subtly encouraging the use of the dictionary and thesaurus. We must not be afraid to be honest with our students either. A comment such as, *While I am not convinced you are right, you have said it well. Perhaps your argument would be stronger if . . .*, is not threatening to the student. A teacher needs to respect student ideas and opinions, not necessarily agree with them.

Mechanical errors must be corrected, but the initial emphasis always should be on the content. Mechanical errors can be approached naturally through proofreading, and mini-grammar lessons might be conducted in flexible grouping situations. If writing assignments are truly individualized, if extensive use is made of individual conferences, and if a student record is kept of the types of mechanical problems which surface, each student will probably have had a fairly thorough review of grammar by the end of the year without the teacher having to teach the same grammar to the entire class. If the majority of the class seems to be having similar problems, a quick review could be profitable. However, most grammatical problems could be handled either individually or by grouping students for skill teaching when the need arises.

Creative writing is personal writing, but it is often useful and necessary to provide some sort of external stimulation for writing. Classroom atmosphere, that is, the teacher attitude of acceptance and openness, is important as well as is the actual physical setting. A constantly changing display of pictures (which students might help to contribute), background music, the relating of personal experiences, and the sharing of exciting phrases or other writing all help to foster creativity. Experiences are necessary for students to have something to write about, and the teacher is a creative helper in providing experiences and ideas and stimulating student thinking.

The time and place for writing are important, too. Most original drafting of student writing will probably take place in the classroom, but students may also discover that they need to have a quiet place by themselves to write or that they need the stimulation of activity of some nature. Because not everyone can be creative under the same circumstances, students should have opportunities to experiment with writing under various conditions. Brainstorming is a technique frequently used by teachers. This type of idea sharing often produces a chain reaction within students' minds.

If the proper rapport has been established with students, it is rarely if ever necessary to set a maximum or minimum length for writing assignments. Rather than word-counting, students need to concentrate on expressing their ideas fully and completely. Similarly, students are rarely given a single topic on which the entire class must write. Not all students can be creative on the same topic. It is much better for the teacher to employ some specific motivating technique such as one of the sensory stimulation activities and let each student write what he feels like writing.

Another example of stimulation is class discussion of writing which causes strong emotional reactions. The teacher could read Edgar Allan Poe's poem "The Bells" or some other work which is guaranteed to produce an emotional reaction. After the reading, the class could discuss what emotions they felt and what element in the story or poem helped them to feel that way. Each student could try to write something that would produce a specific emotional reaction. It could be a short story, a poem or even a paragraph of prose. Encouraging the student to choose the vehicle and the topic within a rough framework allows for more creative expression and freedom.

Sharing creative writing with classmates can have many advantages if students are properly prepared to accept this responsibility. Otherwise, it could be a very threatening and negative approach which could do much to destroy spontaneity and inhibit creativity. Students deserve the option of having their work presented anonymously for classroom critique; the teacher may wish to help students choose literary names to be used as pseudonyms to preserve anonymity. In sharing their writing, students have an opportunity to "try out" their ideas on their peers, to receive feedback on the content of their writing, and to see if they really are

communicating what they feel. If they are not, they have an instant opportunity to find out why. This sharing can also be beneficial in the areas of word usage and vocabulary building. *If these words do not really communicate my thoughts as I want them to be understood by others, which ones would do the job better?* Obviously, students can benefit from the discussion of all papers from their group, not just their own.

Based on small group reactions, students are normally encouraged to rewrite their papers, to polish and proof them, and to share both the original and the rewrite with the teacher. The rewrite will reinforce learning while the two versions of the paper will give the teacher an opportunity to note growth, areas of weakness, and small group effectiveness.

One of the best ways of building rapport and inspiring trust and confidence is for the teacher to share in all writing. That is, if the students are writing poetry, the teacher writes poetry, too. The practice of writing along with the students is one which could be repeated throughout the year. Effective modelling by the teacher — whether it be in reading, writing or speaking — is one of the best teaching tools we have.

When a student's work has reached its final form, when the revising and polishing and proofing have been completed, and when the student is happy with the product, what do we do with it? It often seems anticlimatic to return a student paper and forget about it. There are many ways to make further use of these papers: offer them for publication in school newspapers or literary magazines or other appropriate local or national publications, compile individual or class books, give readings, dramatize, and so forth. Teachers should seek out other outlets, for this type of activity fosters the sense of pride, achievement and accomplishment within students which makes them want to write more and better. This is similar to an artist or craftsman making something; there is pride in completing the job to your own satisfaction, but the real pay-off comes from the admiration of your work by others.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SHORT STORY

A short story is just that, a **short** story, either fiction or nonfiction. There are numerous types of short stories — folk tales, fairy tales, first person narratives, mysteries, adventures, science fiction, and so forth. In terms of length, there is no magic dividing line between the short story and the novel. For instance, **Love Story** is considered by most people to be a short story while a story such as **The Bridge of San Luis Rey** is considered a novel even though it is approximately the same length. There is a gray area between the two literary forms concerning their length.

Both short stories and novels have the same major elements. A story — of any length — must have characters, setting and plot. The characters are the "people" of the story, those who act and are the receivers of action by others. Animals and objects such as red balloons are sometimes found as main characters. The writer uses vivid description and dialogue so that the reader gets to know these characters. The dialogue discloses character by what the person says about himself, what he thinks, what other people say to him, and what other people say to each other about him. In a short story there are usually no more than three or four main characters. There could be only one.

The setting is the background — the where, when and under what conditions — that the reader must know in order to understand and appreciate the story. Although amateur writers often disclose the setting in an opening sentence or two ("It was a snowy night in February during the bleak days of the Depression.") or spend paragraphs describing the setting in minute detail, the more skillful writer will work in descriptions around and through dialogue and action. The plot is the action, the story line. The author chooses a series of events or incidents which describe the action and lead the reader to the conclusion or climax, usually by leading the characters to, over or around various obstacles. According to one writer, the plot merely leads the characters into a situation and out again.

The short story has no set form. It may follow a chronological order — introduction, body, conclusion — much as a fairy tale does: "Once upon a time there lived . . . and they lived happily ever after." Or the story may work backwards through the action, beginning with the conclusion or climax and viewing the events which led up to it through flashbacks: "The trap door was sprung. The body of John Wilkes Booth dropped and swayed gently in the faint breeze. The judge stood silently, reflecting on the events of the past several months . . ." Regardless of form, however, the short story must always contain the three essential elements — character, setting and plot.

READING THE SHORT STORY

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students gain an understanding and appreciation of the short story form through reading.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

One of the best aids in helping students to write short stories is to encourage them to read short stories and examine how recognized authors have dealt with character, setting and plot. The study of the short story as a literary form can be developed as a separate unit in literature study, or it can be coordinated with the existing literature program by recommending stories which fit a particular theme, group of authors or literary period.

Through study of the short story, students will be able to recognize devices used in the development of character, setting and plot in addition to skills used by various authors to make their stories meaningful. These might include use of dialogue and dialect, sequencing, descriptive devices, suspense building techniques, use of humor, surprise endings and many others. By stimulating students with a wide variety of authors and, therefore, techniques, through carefully chosen, high interest material, the teacher is more likely to motivate students to write their own short stories.

1.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

With little or no introduction, you may read or play a recording of Edward Everett Hale's "Man Without a Country." Following the reading, ask the students to identify the main character and to tell how they feel about him. The reactions may be listed on the chalkboard along with words or phrases describing Philip Nolan's character.

Ask the students to identify the other characters in the story and to relate what their roles or functions are. Help students to discover that the other characters in the story are secondary. Their only function is to further the characterization of Philip Nolan. They have little character of their own.

Next, ask for a brief description of the story's setting and a plot summary which can be built on the chalkboard in no more than three or four sentences. Comparing the information now listed under the headings of CHARACTER-SETTING-PLOT, ask which of these three elements seems to be the most important in this story. The resulting discussion will help the students to understand that the plot is not always the most important element of the story. "Man Without a Country" is a character study of Philip Nolan. The plot and setting in this case are secondary; they serve the function of revealing more of Nolan's character.

2.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Encourage students to read other short stories. If this study is being coordinated with the literature program, you may recommend specific authors who fit into the program. You may also wish to ask the librarian to prepare a bibliography which would assist the students in their selections, or the students may choose their own stories at random.

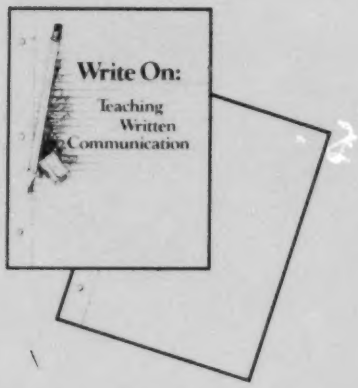
During and after reading the short stories, students are asked to take notes covering the following points. You may prepare a sheet for each student.

1. Name of story
2. Description of main characters (words and phrases)
   a. Character #1
   b. Character #2
   c. etc.
3. Description of setting (2-3 sentences)
4. Plot summary (3-4 sentences)
5. Most important element and why (character, setting, plot)
6. Interesting techniques used by author (surprise ending, flashbacks, humor, etc.)
7. Emotional reaction to story (What the story meant to me)
8. Influence of characters and/or plot on the action

The students' notes can be used as the basis of an extended class discussion on the art and craft of the short story writer. A hoped-for spinoff of this activity is that students, through their own excitement about a particular author or story, will generate interest among the other students to do further reading of short stories.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Given a selected short story, students will identify and describe the three major elements of a short story (character, setting, plot) as well as the plot sequence. They will also identify the predominant element in the story and state why.



CHARACTER PORTRAITS AND THE SHORT STORY

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students develop those skills needed to write good characterizations or character portraits.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

In writing characterizations or character portraits, the writer has to do his job so well that the reader sees a person as the author intended him to. Characterizations are built by using nouns and adjectives as well as similes and metaphors. Skilled writers avoid stereotyped descriptions. Rather than *He was tall, dark and handsome*, it is much more colorful to say *He seemed almost as tall as the giant redwoods, and his regal face was toned by frequent meetings with the sun*. This kind of writing can produce an emotional reaction within the reader. It paints a picture with words.

Dialogue, too, builds character, both by what the character himself says and by what others say about him. We can often predict just by looking at a person the kinds of things he will say and how he will say them. And we often know what we would like to say to that person or to others about that person. These judgmental feelings may not always be true or accurate, but it seems to be human nature for people to respond to certain physical characteristics in certain ways. Many authors know this and take advantage of it by using those characteristics in characters they want readers to respond to positively or negatively. Helping students develop skills in writing characterizations is an important step in the process of helping them to become short story writers.

1.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Display around the room a large selection of pictures of different types of people, each picture showing only one person. Students might add pictures to this display. Each picture should be numbered. The pictures can be photographs, paintings, drawings or any other type of graphic representation. Each student chooses one to describe, someone unknown to the student, using words or phrases. Encourage the use of the dictionary and thesaurus to expand descriptions. Students are asked to describe both physical appearance and surmised personality.

When all descriptions have been completed, students are asked to put the number of the picture they described at the top of the sheet and turn in their papers. Choose some of the best descriptions and have them tape recorded — without identification — by one reader. As each description is played, the students review the display of pictures to try to choose which person is being described. They discuss what the character is like and how the writer transferred this image. The students are reminded, if necessary, that character descriptions include both physical appearance and personality traits. This activity supports characterization based mainly on physical appearance.

Another possibility for this activity is to ask those students describing the same picture to compare and contrast their descriptions. The students are helped to realize that perception of personality is judgmental. One student's estimation of a person's personality may differ radically from another

student's interpretation, and both are or may be legitimate. Each of us perceives people differently.

Other possibilities for interpreting character include listening to a recording and reacting to speech and tone or viewing a film clip without sound and describing a character through actions and nonverbal language.

The students may be asked to use their list of words and phrases to write one well developed paragraph describing the person in the picture they chose, or they may write a paragraph describing a person they actually know. Character descriptions or portraits need to be so clear that the reader can conjure up an image of a real person.

2. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Students enjoy writing similes and metaphors, although they can sometimes carry this activity too far. Care needs to be taken that the discussion does not get personal. Students are reminded that a simile is a figure of speech in which two or more unlike objects are compared using *like* or *as*. For example, *she is as small as a minute*, or *he has a voice like a fog horn*. A metaphor is a figure of speech which implies a comparison of two or more unlike objects. It is created by using a word or phrase usually used to describe one object to describe another unlike object. For example, *the man's life is an open book*, or *her eyes were hollow pits of despair*.

List on the chalkboard such examples as:

The old sea captain was as crafty as . . .
The beggar was as pathetic as . . .
The astronaut was as careful as . . .
The pile-up on the freeway looked like . . .
The forest was as cool as . . .

The students are given an opportunity to complete these similes in as many ways as possible. Through this activity, the students may see that similes are often humor-producing devices.

Metaphors are sometimes more difficult to devise. Give several examples to stimulate student thinking and ask students for contributions. Through this and the preceding activity, students may realize that similes and metaphors can often be forced and unnatural. Skillful writers use these devices only when they can be worked naturally into the flow of the narration.

3. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Ask two student volunteers to role-play a fictional situation. The situation may involve characters in conflict, in agreement, having a good time, being helpful, or some other situation that has relevance to the class. After giving students a minute to prepare themselves, let them role-play the situation for several minutes.

When the role-playing is done, list the two characters on the chalkboard and ask the class to describe them as they presented themselves through the role-playing. Physical descriptions are not necessary unless they were brought out in the conversation. This activity helps the students to see how character is revealed through dialogue, both by what a person says and by what is said to and about him.

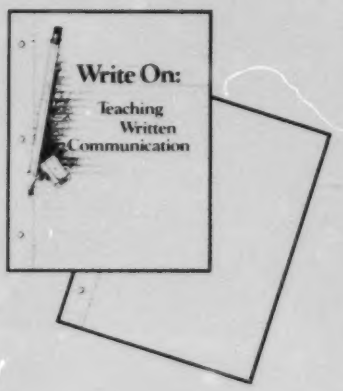
In writing dialogue, a device called a speech tag is usually used to tell who is doing the talking. The tag may also be a device for revealing character. *Said* is a simple, useful tag, but there are many more descriptive tags which could be used such as growled, roared, shouted, laughed. Ask for other suggestions and list these on the chalkboard for examination.

Speech tags always contain a verb, and that verb can be modified by an adverb to define the action even more. For instance, a person can growl ferociously, cruelly, or softly. The list of speech tags on the chalkboard can be expanded by adding adverb modifiers to each of them.

Using two of the pictures from the first suggested application or two real or imaginary people, the students are asked to write a conversation between the two people concerning any situation or topic. The purpose of this activity is to reveal the character of the two people through their dialogue. The students are reminded that they can determine the success of their own descriptions by asking themselves, after reading the completed paper, what they can tell about the character of the two speakers. They can further test the success of their descriptions by asking friends to read the paper and then describe the two speakers in their own words. Do the descriptions match fairly well?

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Given the assignment to write a character sketch of one real or fictional person, the student will make appropriate use of nouns and adjectives, similes and metaphors, and dialogue with descriptive speech tags (verbs and adverbs) in order to paint a vivid word picture of that person's physical appearance and personality.



SETTING AND THE SHORT STORY

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students develop those skills needed to write good story settings.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

Sometimes the setting of a short story is extremely important, at other times not so much so. The writer, of course, determines how much description of setting is necessary to give the reader a feeling of being there. Some writers want to describe exactly where the apple is hanging on the tree while others are content to state that it is an apple tree.

The nature of the story and the author's purpose usually dictate the extent to which the setting is described. Poe, for instance, took great pains to describe the sights, sounds and smells of his settings because a large measure of the success of his stories was determined by the eerie, haunting feeling he was able to create within his readers. Hale, on the other hand, gave only a general description of setting in "Man Without a Country." His most extensive description was of Nolan's shipboard quarters, and this was done as a character-revealing device.

The writing of setting is closely related to sensory language. The writer tries to stimulate the senses in order to take the readers away from reality and place them as participants, if only inactive ones, in the story. As with character development, the writing of setting makes extensive use of adjectives, similes and metaphors. In describing an old dungeon, a locale that is unfamiliar to most people, the writer must use terms readers will know and relate to, such as *The dimly lit dungeon, with mortar crumbling from between the stones, smelled like an overused dishrag*. The descriptive adjectives and the simile create a definite sensory image.

Students can get very involved in writing an extensive but isolated setting description. However, in actually writing a story, they must determine their overall purposes and decide how much detail should be provided for the reader.

1. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

The class is asked to count off by 5's. All 1's, all 2's, and so forth, are separate groups. Each group is given a paper bag containing an object. Without removing the object from the bag, the students can feel it or smell it, but they cannot look at it or discuss it with other group members. This activity is appropriate for any age group. To make it challenging for high school students, the objects need to be somewhat difficult. They might include such things as a spool of thread or wire, a piece of cereal such as shredded wheat, a piece of popped popcorn, an empty toothpaste tube or a wooden match.

After feeling and smelling the object inside the bag, students write individual descriptions of what they felt and smelled. Obviously, some of the objects do not smell which may make the identification more difficult. If the students believe they have identified the object, ask them to describe it on the basis of what they have actually felt and possibly smelled rather than what they believe it to be.

When the descriptions are written, regroup the students so that each group contains a 1, a 2, and so forth. Ask each group to number a piece of paper from 1 to 5. The 1 of each group reads a description after which the others write down what they think the object is. After all have had a turn reading their descriptions, the group members compare answers. If they differ,

students are given a chance to state what about the description helped them guess the way they did. After this activity, the contents of each bag are revealed. The number of right guesses per group for any object makes a statement about the strength of the description.

Similar activities involving sensory writing could be carried out by providing each group with brief recordings of different sounds (train, crowd, musical instruments), covered containers of different substances to smell (vinegar, motor oil, ketchup) or covered containers of substances to taste (salt, pepper, sugar, flour, spices). Descriptions are written in terms of what the students actually sense rather than what they know the substance or sound to be. Students might be asked to contribute to the collection of substances and sounds.

At this point a brief review of similes and metaphors is appropriate. Ask the students how many times they described an object by stating that it felt like . . . , tasted like . . . , smelled like . . . , and so on. In the context of sensory writing, similes are much more likely. Did any students describe an object or sound by using a metaphor?

2.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Another possibility for a descriptive writing activity is to have students describe in detail their pens or pencils. This could be done in one paragraph and would possibly involve the use of similes or metaphors. After the paragraphs are written, the students put their pens or pencils on a table in the center of the room. Then, as students read their own descriptions, the other students try to choose the pen or pencil being described. This type of writing will force students to focus on minute detail in order to distinguish their pen or pencil from all of the others in the class.

3.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Ask students to think of a special place which has meaning for them, a place they would like to tell others about or help others experience. It may be a happy place, a sad place, or a noisy place. If the students have trouble deciding on a place, using stimulators such as the following may help:

When I want to be alone, I often go . . .
The best time I ever had took place . . .
The most beautiful spot I have ever seen was . . .
When I'm sad, I often go to or think about . . .
The messiest place I have ever seen is . . .

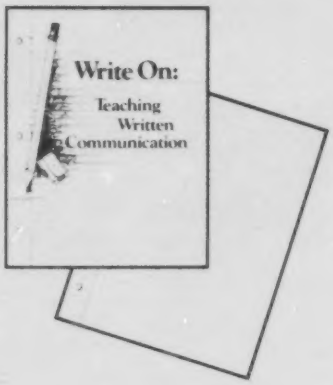
When all students have picked a spot, ask them to list all of the adjectives they can think of to describe that spot. The adjectives will usually describe how the place looks. Remind students to include adjectives to describe smell, sound, taste and feel, where appropriate.

Ask the students to write at least one paragraph describing the spot they have chosen in such a way that the reader has the feeling of actually being there. They need not, probably should not, try to use all of the adjectives they listed. Nor do they need to use similes or metaphors unless they can be worked naturally into the description.

An interesting follow-up to this activity is drawings of the spots by a student other than the author. Ask students to put a numeral rather than their names on the papers. Redistribute the papers so that no student has his own paper. Each student is asked to read the description and to draw on the back of the paper a picture representing the setting. The teacher will return the papers to their authors. Students will enjoy seeing pictures of the images they created.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Students will be able to write a description of a specific setting by making appropriate use of descriptive adjectives, similes and metaphors to create vivid word pictures and sensory images.



PLOT AND THE SHORT STORY

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students develop those skills needed to write good story plots.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

Usually the most important element of a story is its plot. The plot provides the framework or structure of the story — the action or the happening. If the plot involves a distant or unusual time or place, there may be extensive description of the setting. If the action is peculiar to or guided by a specific type of person or persons, there is apt to be more than the usual amount of characterization. But the essential element remains the plot. The writer has a series of events or actions which he wants to relate, and the characters and setting serve, in most cases, to explain or carry out the events in some particular context.

Because plot implies action, this is an appropriate time to review action words, verbs and their modifying adverbs. Exciting verbs help the plot to move along. Colorless verbs give the story a sluggish, slow-moving feeling, and the reader is not apt to become really involved or interested in the story.

This is also an appropriate time to study sequencing or chronology. The writer must have firmly in mind the order in which all of the events relating to the plot occur. Once the events have been identified and sequenced, if only mentally, the writer can then take the liberty of rearranging them in some manner. For instance, in a murder mystery story, much of the action is usually revealed after the fact as it might be uncovered by the detectives or confessed to by the murderer. But, if such rearrangement does occur, the writer must be careful not to confuse the reader. As actions are uncovered, the reader must be able to place them in the proper chronological sequence if he is to truly appreciate the story. A review of sequence clue words such as **and, next, then, following, subsequently,** and **prior to** would be appropriate at this point as well as a review of verb tenses.

1.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

List on the chalkboard several simple, brief sentences such as:

The miler **ran** around the track.
The quarterback **threw** the football.
The ambulance driver **drove** to the hospital.
The tennis player **hit** the ball.

The students are asked how many different ways the sentences can be stated to communicate more feeling of action. For example, "the trapped quarterback frantically unloaded the football" or "the exhausted tennis player barely lobbed the ball back to her opponent." Several of the responses should be written on the chalkboard under each example.

Through this exercise the students gain an appreciation of how well-chosen verbs and adverbs speed up or give more meaningful action to the story. Students also notice, with teacher guidance if necessary, that adjectives often imply something about the action. For instance, a trapped being of any kind conjures up an image of nervousness, fear, and wide eyes. And an exhausted person might be pictured as sweaty, limp, dragging. So, while adjectives are not action words, they do help to give the feeling of action to a sentence.

2.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

As a preliminary exercise in sequencing, each student is given a sheet of paper on which is written a story title and a series of 8-10 events taken from that imaginary story. For example:

The Tragedy of the Willow Creek Flood

_____1. The pressure from the rising water kept Kent from opening the car doors.

_____2. The snake-like road had become as slippery as a sheet of polished glass from the constant, driving rain.

_____3. It was getting very late, and the two young boys repeatedly told their father they wanted to go home.

_____4. Only as he rounded the sharp curve did Kent see the body of a deer lying in his path.

_____5. But where were the children? Were they still trapped inside the submerged car? As he tried to climb back in the window, panic and a wave of nausea gripped Kent just before he lost consciousness.

_____6. Kent considered taking the longer way home, but the whining boys and his blinding headache helped him decide that the Willow Creek Road was probably safe enough, despite the rain.

_____7. Dazed and bleeding from the blow to his forehead, Kent finally removed his shoe. He broke the window and climbed through and into the cold, swirling water.

_____8. Kent regained consciousness and became aware of the whiteness surrounding him, the austerity of a hospital. Then he remembered, and the panic and nausea returned.

_____9. Reflexively, he jerked the steering wheel to avoid the animal.

Ask students to place the events in chronological order by renumbering them on the blank lines. When each student has completed the task, review the events with the class. It would be helpful if the teacher had each event on a separate slip of paper so that each could be placed on an overhead or opaque projector in the proper sequence.

When the chronological sequence has been agreed upon, the students can discuss in what sequences the story could be told and the advantages of different sequences. For instance, the story could be related as a flashback from the time Kent regained consciousness.

In reviewing the chronological sequence, students will notice some obvious gaps in the action. For example, what happened between the time the car swerved and the water pressure kept the door closed? What happened between the time Kent passed out and the time he came to in the hospital? What happened to the boys? What is going to happen to Kent? Where were they before they left for home? Students will enjoy filling in the action as well as surmising as to Kent's character. How important is the setting to this story? This activity gives the students an opportunity not only to understand and work with the concept of sequence but also to strengthen and practice skills in characterization and setting.

3. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Divide the class into groups so that each group contains 8-10 members. Each group selects a story title such as:

The Senior Dance That Almost Wasn't
The Mystery of (name of school) High
The Laughing Legend
Summer Fever

Each team member is asked to write, without consulting teammates, one piece of action (1-2 sentences) which could be associated with a plot relating to the story title. Each team is given a large pad of newsprint or a space on the chalkboard. As each member reads his contribution, a recorder copies it down, abbreviating if necessary. The teams then try to put the 8 or 10 pieces of action into a likely sequence and to weave a story around them. Some of the events may need to be altered slightly, and gaps in the action will need to be filled.

Following this activity, one member from each team might be chosen to tell the story to the rest of the class. In this case, little more than a plot outline would need to be given. Another alternative might be to ask the teams to develop an actual story from the plot outline. This would include character development and setting and could be completed as a group project by each team or as an individual project by each team member.

This suggested application further strengthens skills in using action words to outline plot, sequencing, and developing characters and settings as well as human relations skills in working with groups.

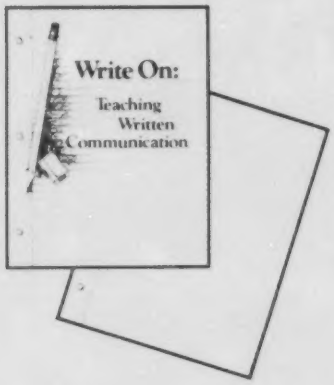
4. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Another suggestion for dealing with plot would be to give the students a few minutes to decide on a story topic. When all students have chosen a topic, the class begins writing. At the end of three minutes, students hand their stories to the person behind them. After reading the paper just received, students continue to write the new story. This procedure is repeated every three minutes until the students have received their own papers back. At this point, the students read the entire story and write a conclusion to it.

This activity is often amusing and gives students an opportunity to deal with plot sequencing skills without having an overall picture of the entire story outline. Some students may wish to share their stories orally while others may want to circulate their papers for the class to read.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Students will be able to write plot outlines by making use of appropriate verbs and adverbs as well as sequencing skills to make the outline vivid, exciting and creative.



WRITING A SHORT STORY

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to guide students in the writing of short stories containing all of the elements necessary for a good short story.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

After reading and hearing several short stories and practicing those skills related to character, setting and plot, students are usually ready to compose their own short stories. The preceding activities may have motivated the students, or additional incentive may still be needed to bolster student confidence and challenge their creative energies.

In addition to using their newly developed short story writing skills, students will obviously have to practice the basic skills of sentence and paragraph construction, capitalization, punctuation, grammar and spelling. A good story concept poorly written is less than satisfactory. However, we must take care not to destroy student enthusiasm in our zeal to help them produce perfect products. Certainly errors in construction are dealt with, but they are dealt with in such a way that the students know our primary concern is helping them express their creativity. **In each writing exercise, teachers should encourage students to polish their work for good word choices and sentence and paragraph arrangement, and to proof their work for mechanical errors.**

1.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Students have many specific incidents, either real or imaginary, which they would like to share with others. Or perhaps there is a special person whom they would like their friends to know. And perhaps something from a previous activity has captured their imagination. Either as a class or in small groups, give the students a chance to brainstorm ideas for potential short stories. This activity might be guided by such open-ended questions and statements as:

I remember when . . .
Do you remember . . . ?
Wouldn't it be fun if . . . ?
I've often dreamed about . . .

After this session, give students time to decide what their short story will be about and to consider how they will include the major elements of character, setting and plot. In class, ask the students to write an outline of their proposed story including:

1. proposed title
2. fiction or nonfiction
3. brief descriptions of proposed characters
4. description of proposed setting
5. brief outline of proposed plot

During this activity, the teacher acts as a resource person, reacting to what the students are writing and motivating those who are having problems. Frequently, students either cannot get started or want to write "the whole world" into one short story. Since spoken language is primary language, students might be encouraged to tell their stories first, then write them.

When students feel comfortable with their outlines, encourage them to begin their stories, using their outlines as guides and writing quickly, not being concerned at this point with punctuation, spelling and grammar. They need to say what they want to say using the best words they can think of. Teacher directions are minimal. The story has no maximum or minimum length.

During the time the students are working on their stories, you may schedule conferences with the students or make conference time available based on student need. This time could be used to review student progress, make suggestions, motivate or stimulate.

You may wish to coordinate this writing with further literature study on the short story. During this period, you may review such topics as characterization techniques, use of dialogue and dialect, sequence, descriptive devices, building suspense, use of humor, and surprise endings.

When the first drafts are completed, teacher and student, on a one-to-one basis, will review the story for elements and devices that might strengthen it, and for mechanical problems. You should be careful not to overwhelm the student. All comments should be made in a positive, constructive manner. Your role is to help the student say what the student wants to say in a better way, not to help the student say what the student wants to say in your words. Based on this conference, encourage the student to rewrite the story, polishing it for better ideas, words and sequence and proofing it for spelling, punctuation and usage.

When the second draft of the story is shared, make two additional copies of it, leaving out the student's name. Each student is given copies of two other students' papers while you keep the original. The students are asked to read the two stories and prepare written comments as you commented on the first draft. The writers are given all three marked copies of their story. They then compile the comments on their story, select those they feel would best improve the story, and prepare a final draft.

The stories may be compiled into a class anthology of short stories and distributed to all class members. This activity could be coordinated with the business department for typing and with the art teacher for illustrations.

If it is not possible to publish a class anthology, perhaps some of the better stories could be reprinted in the school literary magazine or newspaper. In any case, all class members may be given the opportunity to share their short stories with each other. Some may be read silently, others orally, and still others dramatized.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Given the proper instruction and motivation, students will demonstrate their ability to write a short story containing all of the necessary elements of a short story and meeting sound mechanical standards.

THE NOVEL AND DRAMA

OBJECTIVE

To enable teachers to provide interested students with the opportunity to write novels and plays.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

A logical outgrowth of the study of the short story is a study of both the novel and the play. However, these generally are only dealt with through reading rather than writing because of their length and accompanying complications. The possibilities of involving especially talented, creative and energetic students in writing either one of these need not, in any case, be overlooked.

The novel and the play are like the short story in that each has character, setting and plot. And each can be about any subject. However, because of its length, the novel is broken into chapters. Each chapter is a separate unit which deals with a particular time period, or stage of development, but the chapters are closely related to each other in the development of the total story. In the novel there are usually more characters than in the short story, and their development is generally more thorough. The plot, too, is generally more complicated and is often fortified by many sub-plots. And there may be many more settings involved because of the extended plot. Simply put, the novel is like the short story only there is more of everything.

A play communicates its message almost entirely through dialogue. Plays are divided into acts — usually one, three or five of them. A one-act play is much like the short story in its overall simplicity of design, but both can be extremely dramatic and effective. The acts of a play can provide for changes of time and/or setting. While most plays are written for audiences to hear and see, plays obviously must be read by someone. Therefore, there are notes about scenery, props, costumes, and intended character interpretations. There may also be notes throughout the dialogue about how particular lines should be delivered. The notes add to the play reader's enjoyment and understanding of the work, but their real intent is to help actors and directors in presentation. The real meat of the play is the dialogue which must be written to sound natural when spoken and to communicate everything the author intends to both the reading and viewing audience.

1.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

The classroom approach to play writing could be the same as to short story writing in terms of developing the plot, characters and setting. Role-playing could again be used as a stimulation for writing dialogue, and a reader's theater could present excerpts from several different student plays. Students might be encouraged to rewrite a story or an actual happening as a play. In groups of two to four, they might write plays together and present them to the class, with the remainder of the class acting as drama critics. Class books of plays could be produced, or the plays could be offered for publication in the school literary magazine. There is much to be learned and much to be gained in the study of the play form. Student enthusiasm often runs very high due to the active participation.

2.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

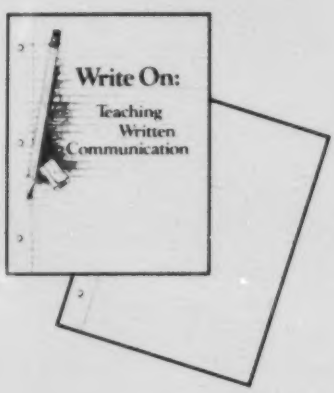
Encourage students who are interested to try their hand at writing a longer play or a novel. Perhaps the short story written earlier could provide a basis

for either one of these activities. Explore the possibilities in individual consultations. If students do accept the challenge, you will need to consider what ongoing stimulation and guidance you can provide to each student and what you can do with the finished product.

Students who do complete a play or novel might be encouraged to produce their plays or to submit their work to an appropriate source outside the school for publication. Student-oriented magazines, literary magazines or book publishers are possible sources. Students might also ask a professional writer to critique — with the understanding, of course, that there would be no charge involved. The important thing is to do **something** special with the student's work. The students probably will have learned that good writing of such long forms is extremely hard and time consuming. But, the students may also be very excited and enthusiastic, and their work should be followed to its logical conclusion. Both the disappointment of the first rejection slip and the thrill of an acceptance are extremely valuable learning experiences if handled properly, and the growth experience itself will be worth all of the effort.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Interested students will be able to write novels and plays following generally accepted formats and will be able to revise their work for mechanical correctness and idea content.



THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students gain an understanding and appreciation of the autobiography as a literary form through the reading and writing of autobiographies.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

Writing autobiographies can be more than the traditional "What I Did on My Summer Vacation" assignment. It can be an exciting self-discovery process for students as they begin to think about and put the major events in their lives into some sort of perspective. This can happen if students not only list major events but also take the time to think about them and comment on the impact or effect of these events. At a time in their lives when students are searching for an identity, grasping for roots and a sense of security, and undergoing the perplexing process of becoming adults, it is usually gratifying for them to read autobiographies of famous figures and to find that those people who have "made it" often had very similar heartbreaks and disappointments, goals and ambitions. The process of thinking through and writing down significant events from their own lives often gives students a chance to put their past, present and future into some sort of perspective.

The autobiography is an attractive literary form for students because people in nearly every occupation have written their life stories — sports figures, statesmen, entertainers, and political activists. Students can easily find an autobiography by someone who shares their interests. Some of the autobiographies might not be considered classics, but they may serve as an inspiration to students, both in terms of life patterning and in fostering a desire to create an autobiography of their own.

Students will discover, too, that an autobiography is not necessarily an exhaustive listing of every event in a person's life. Often many months or even years are summarized in a few sentences. This type of **phase** writing can serve as a bridge from one major event or incident to another. For instance, rather than repeat all of the relatively unimportant details of a certain period, a writer might summarize: *"It seemed that, during my junior high years, nothing was as important to me as remembering not to smile. The gleaming braces on my teeth had created, at least in my own mind, the ugliest person alive."* This type of bridge can be expanded by highlighting one particularly horrifying incident and its effect such as the first day the person went to school with the braces on and how they felt. This distillation or editing process is a significant learning experience.

Through careful guidance and selected reading, students can be helped to gain a sense of personal, historical significance as well as feeling for their own future. Obviously, to achieve these goals, students need to be more than nominally committed to the idea of looking at themselves. Herein, also, lies the challenge of presenting the study of the autobiography in such a way as to be nonthreatening to both the students and their parents. This may be completely contrary to the atmosphere which you have been trying to create all year long — one of openness and trust in which students share all of their writing with their classmates. It will take much teacher skill to maintain this attitude while preserving and protecting student privacy in this most personal and intimate type of writing.

1.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

If the anthology your class uses has an excerpt from someone's autobiography, this would be an appropriate time to read and discuss it. An even better approach might be to secure tapes or records of famous persons reading excerpts from their own autobiographies, or you might choose to read to the class yourself. If students do not already know, they will quickly

discover that an autobiography is the story of a person's life written by that person. Ask the class if any of them have read autobiographies and, if so, which ones. These can be listed on the chalkboard and will probably present a wide array of subjects.

From their own reading, ask students to name the characteristics of an autobiography. Through this discussion, students are helped to discover that:

An autobiography can be written by anyone.

The most successful autobiographies do not **tell** how great a person's achievements are but rather **show** them and let the reader make his own judgments.

Autobiographies follow no set form although they are generally told in chronological order.

Autobiographies can be about a person's whole life or just one significant period of it.

Usually the author chooses events which had an impact on his development.

Long periods of time can be distilled or edited into a short narrative.

Students may be able to identify other characteristics which can also be listed and discussed.

Then, ask students to read an autobiography and examine it for the characteristics discussed. A suggested follow-up to this assignment is to have the students write a character sketch of the author. Each character trait could be documented with events from the subject's life which the reader interprets as having assisted in the trait development and ones which the subject had to overcome in order to develop that particular trait.

2. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

The writing of student autobiographies can be handled in a variety of ways. However, of prime importance is convincing the students of the personal and private nature of this writing. Papers could be shared unsigned or with a fictitious name.

Students can approach this writing from one of at least two different directions. They can take a hard look at themselves and characterize themselves as honestly as possible with a succession of adjectives such as honest, loyal, shy, enthusiastic, sarcastic, or bitter. Then they can choose incidents and anecdotes from their past to illustrate these points, or they can choose to write about significant events in their lives and analyze the effect of these events on their character. The skills needed to complete this writing will include self-perception, illustration of points by showing rather then telling, combining significant events with appropriate bridge material to make the story smooth and interesting. During this writing the teacher acts as a resource person, reacting to drafts, pointing out strengths and weaknesses, and making constructive suggestions for improvement.

When the writing is completed, the students may wish to discuss "Who Am I?" based on their reactions to writing about themselves. Since this is a

very personal discussion, some students will not want to volunteer, and they should not feel forced to do so. Those who do join in the discussion might tell what they learned about themselves which they never thought about before and what implications autobiographic writing might have for their future goals.

3.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

The autobiography could be designed as a long-term writing project in which students write individual chapters from time to time throughout the semester or year. Then, at some point in the year, these could be compiled and bridged together with appropriate narrative.

Ask students to brainstorm possible chapter titles and list them on the chalkboard. Some possibilities include:

How and When My Family First Came to This City, State or Country
What I Was Like When I First Started to School
My Family and Good Times We've Had
Being an Only Child/Being One of a Large Family
My Favorite Recreation
My First Night Away from Home
Promises I've Failed to Keep
Earning My First Money
What I'm Planning to Be
A Good Joke on Myself

Each student plans an outline of eight to ten topics for the total autobiography. Students evaluate their outlines to insure that there is a balance between past, present and future. Obviously, the bulk of the work will deal with the past, but the present and future should not be ignored. Creativity is encouraged in conceptualizing the outline to make it different and more interesting. For instance, the work of a student named Thatcher could be shared with the class. He found that his name meant "one who thatches roofs." Therefore, he outlined the chapters of his autobiography in the following manner:

I. Building Site Is Chosen (family tree)
II. Foundation (parents)
III. Walls (his birth, other children)
IV. Doors, Windows (his school life)
V. Thatching the Roof (college, work and goals)

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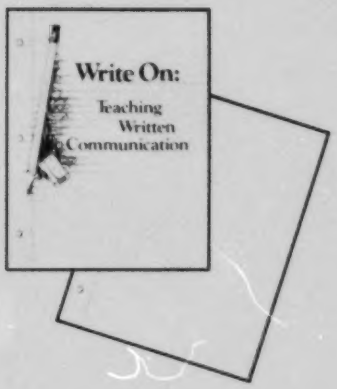
Once the outline has been agreed upon, students can work on segments at their own pace, or segments could be due at certain times. Review each chapter with the student, encouraging him to revise and polish. Students could be encouraged to enlist the assistance of their parents in tracing family background and recalling specific instances.

When each of the individual segments has been completed, students should examine them as a total unit. The unit may stand as a completed document, or students may wish to add additional material to fill in some gaps before considering the document complete. Covers could illustrate the family crest

or coat of arms, the meaning of the last name, or some event from the story. Since these autobiographies are personal, they will not be shared with the class but can be kept as a keepsake if the students so desire. Material collected for these activities may also be used as raw material for other writing activities.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Students will be able to demonstrate an interest in and appreciation of the autobiography as a literary form by completing their own autobiographies.



THE BIOGRAPHY

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students gain an understanding and appreciation of the biography as a literary form through reading and writing.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

There is little difference between teaching the biography and the autobiography with the obvious exception that the biography is not self-centered. The biography is the story of one person's life written by another person. Like the autobiography, the biography: (1) can be written by anyone or about anyone, (2) **shows** rather than **tells** about a person's achievements and lets the reader make his own judgments, (3) follows no set form although it is usually in chronological order, (4) can be about a person's whole life or just one segment of it, (5) chooses to relate events which made a significant impact on the subject, (6) can distill long periods of time into phases through brief narrative.

Achieving objectivity is a problem common to both biographies and autobiographies. When writers choose a subject for a biography, they generally do so because they respect and admire that person and want to create the same kind of feeling in their readers. Those incidents which show the subject in a less than favorable light are sometimes deleted or at least cleaned up. The authors are not displaying much trust in their readers or faith in their own ability to communicate by doing this. They admire and respect the subject even though they know these less than positive things about him, but they do not have faith that they can communicate or their readers can understand and reach the same conclusion. The subject in those cases often appears as someone too good to be true, someone with no negative human qualities — in short, someone totally unbelievable as a person.

The same problem can occur when the biographer does not admire his subject. The author may choose to write a biography of an infamous character in order to tell the world what a scoundrel and rogue that person is. In these cases, any incident or anecdote which tends to give the subject more humane qualities tends to be eliminated or toned down lest the reader get the impression that the subject is not really such a bad character. Again this does not put much faith in the reader's judgment.

This point, then, may be the primary emphasis in the study of the biography, that students can learn to be aware of the classical "snow job," of less than honest reporting, whether it be in biographies or news reporting. In reading a biography, this reaction must usually be based only on feelings unless the reader is able to do further research on the subject to check out the accuracy. However, in writing biographies, students can be very much aware of how honestly and accurately they portray their subjects.

1. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Students have probably been reading biographies for years since many series of them are written for the early elementary age. Now biographies are a popular form for lionizing entertainers who have become something near folk heroes. Undoubtedly many students have read some of these. Consider tape recording a 10-15 minute portion of one of them for use with your class. Record a portion or excerpts from several portions which **you** feel may be glamorizing or not exactly presenting a true picture. Play the recording for your class with little or no introduction and ask for their reactions. Remember that some of the students may be enthralled with the subject of the book and will be very defensive of any attempts to remove the subject from a pedestal. Through a carefully designed discussion, help

the students to see possible biased reporting. Some clues to look for might be an excessive use of flowery adjectives and superlatives such as most handsome, best looking, greatest ability, coolest, most fantastic, and so forth as well as a tendency to find excuses for the subject's less than desirable behavior. Based on their own knowledge of the subject, some students may be able to expose some of the biases.

Discuss with the students why an author would want to paint an unrealistic picture of a person. Some discussion starters might be :

> How would you feel about the subject if the faulty images were corrected?
>
> Why do we so often seem to feel the need for a hero or heroine?
>
> Can a person be a hero or heroine if they are less than perfect, if they have human weaknesses or shortcomings?
>
> Can we identify better with a person who is shown to be nearly perfect in every way or with a person who is more like ourselves but has achieved despite possible shortcomings?
>
> Can we handle imperfections in our heroes?

This discussion could have very interesting outcomes because some people tend to cling tenaciously to their own folk heroes but yet demand that everyone "tell it like it is." The intent of the discussion is not to defrock the heroes but rather to help students become alert to bias or lack of objectivity in biographic (and autobiographic) writing.

If your students are asked to do occasional written or oral book reports, consider having them read biographies and deal with the notion of objectivity in their reporting.

2.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Ask your students what kinds of information writers would need to know about a person before they write a biography of that person. These could be listed on the chalkboard. Some suggestions are:

> statistical information (name, age, date and place of birth, and so forth)
>
> family background
>
> educational background
>
> occupation (what and why it was chosen)
>
> hobbies
>
> character traits
>
> significant events
>
> likes and dislikes

Ask the students to choose someone about whom they have a very positive feeling, someone they know well and would like for their classmates to meet.

This could be a parent or grandparent, brother or sister, other relative, minister or priest, close friend, teacher or others. This writing would probably be more successful and interesting if the students chose someone outside their immediate family, but the subject must be someone they know personally, not a famous person about whom biographies appear in the encyclopedia, the library or in movie magazines.

When each student has chosen a subject, ask how they would find out enough information about that person to write a biography. Obviously, they will have to talk with or interview the person. Help students to develop a questionnaire which might be an outline of the ideas listed on the chalkboard. When the students get to the item "character traits," ask them how they feel about the person they have chosen. They can jot down as many descriptive adjectives as possible.

After all students have designed a questionnaire, ask them to use this instrument to interview their chosen subject. Some people may feel threatened by this type of "exposure" and may refuse to cooperate. In such cases, students may suggest using a fictional name for the subject, or they may have to choose another subject. Using the questionnaire, students interview their subjects. When they reach the "character trait" portion, they might choose to ask the subject to describe himself and give examples to substantiate these feelings. Or, the students may state how they feel about the subject and ask for the subject's reaction to this as well as some examples of incidents or anecdotes.

In writing the biography, students need to keep in mind the idea that, while this is a special person whom they want others to admire and respect, the subject is also human and should not be glamorized beyond reality. In the first draft, you should suggest eliminations or additions which could strengthen the character portrait, and the students should have an opportunity to correct any false impressions.

After review and rewrite, you should go over the biographies again with the students. You might also review the discussion held at the beginning of the first application and encourage the students to discuss what they have learned through working with the biography. Additional questions to consider in this discussion might be:

Why do people write biographies?

Why are biographies almost always about famous people?

Why do people read biographies?

What functions could biographies serve when they are written about relatively young people?

How much information does the public **have the right** to know about famous people such as sports figures and entertainers?

Is it more enjoyable to read biographies or auto-biographies?

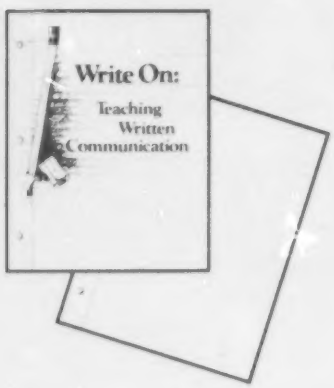
Is it more difficult to write biographies or autobiographies?

What are some of the similarities and differences between biographies and autobiographies?

Perhaps several of the subjects of the student biographies would be willing to come to the class to discuss how they felt about being interviewed and their reactions to the completed work. They might also add to the class discussion their own experiences and feelings about reading biographies. It would be a thoughtful gesture to present the subjects with a final typed copy of their biographies.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Students will be able to evaluate a biography in terms of its technical structure and its objectivity as well as write a technically sound and objective biography.



THE ESSAY

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students gain an understanding and appreciation of the formal and informal essays as literary forms through reading and writing.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

Since man began writing, he has been recording his opinions not only to share with other men but also to help clarify his own thinking. Although ancient Greeks and Romans such as Plato, Cicero and Marcus Aurelius produced many works which we now classify as essays, the essay as a literary form was not so classified until the 1500's by a Frenchman, Michel de Montaigne. He applied the word *essai* to his experiments with written ideas since this word means "an effort to do something, an attempt, a trial." Therefore, an essay is really an attempt to put thoughts into writing. The essay became a popular form for English writers such as Francis Bacon, Oliver Goldsmith, Charles Lamb and Robert Louis Stevenson before spreading to American writers including Thomas Paine, Washington Irving, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Today we recognize two essay forms — the formal and the informal, or the serious and the humorous. Both forms emphasize the opinion of the writer or the group which the writer represents. **The opinion expressed in the informal essay is often based solely on one's reaction to a situation while the opinion in the formal essay is usually based on fact.** For example, an essay on energy-saving ideas might deal with an overstated description of a frantic faucet-checking, light switch-flipping, bicycle-riding man. This would likely take a humorous tone and be considered an informal essay. However, the same topic might be used in a formal essay in which the writer states his opinion that we must all do our share to conserve energy because . . . and relates the apparent wasting of resources, their dwindling supply, and a pessimistic forecast for the future. This writer has taken what he perceives to be factual material and has used it to substantiate personal opinion.

Here, then, are the major differences between formal and informal essays. A formal essay is serious and dignified while the informal essay is conversational and usually humorous. Both emphasize personal opinion based, in varying degrees, on factual material. High school students, generally holding many opinions on a variety of subjects, will probably enjoy the opportunity of putting their opinions into a form for sharing and discussion.

1. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Reproduce copies of the following essays by Robert Benchley and Helen Keller for student use. For discussion purposes, it would probably be helpful if the titles and authors' names were eliminated and the essays numbered. Ask the class to read the two essays, both for enjoyment and to see what similarities and differences there are between the two. On the chalkboard list:

Essay #1	Essay #2

Discussing one essay at a time, ask the students to point out what the characteristics are. Ask the students why anyone would want to write either an informal or a formal essay — what are the uses of an essay? If Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" is considered an extended essay (and it is), for what purpose was it written during Revolutionary War times? Why were

The Tooth, the Whole Tooth, and Nothing but the Tooth
by Robert Benchley

The English language may hold a more disagreeable combination of words than "The doctor will see you now." I am willing to concede something to the phrase "Have you anything to say before the current is turned on?" That may be worse for the moment, but it doesn't last so long. For true depression I know nothing to equal "The doctor will see you now." . . .

Smiling feebly, you trip over the extended feet of the man next to you, and stagger into the chamber of horrors. And there, amid a ghastly array of death masks of teeth, blue flames waving eerily from Bunsen burners, and the drowning sound of perpetually running water which chokes and gurgles from time to time, you sink into the dentist chair and close your eyes.

Three Days to See
by Helen Keller

How was it possible, I asked myself, to walk for an hour through the woods and see nothing worthy of note? I who cannot see find hundreds of things to interest me through mere touch. I feel the delicate symmetry of a leaf. I pass my hands lovingly about the smooth skin of a silver birch, or the rough shaggy bark of a pine. . . .

Occasionally, if I am very fortunate, I place my hand gently on a small tree and feel the happy quiver of a bird in full song. . . .

At times my heart cries out with longing to see all these things. If I can get so much pleasure from mere touch, how much more beauty must be revealed by sight? Yet those who have eyes apparently see little. . . . It is a great pity that in the world of light the gift of sight is used only as a mere convenience rather than as a means of adding fullness to life.

If I were the president of a university, I should establish a compulsory course in "How To Use Your Eyes."

essays on pacificism distributed as pamphlets during the Vietnam War? Why are essays concerning political candidates and the issues distributed at election time?

The use of the formal essay should be clear by now — to express an opinion, usually with the idea of garnering support or changing someone else's opinion. But what of the informal essay? Could the humorous essay have the same use as the serious one? Students can be helped to discover that, through humor — often involving satire or sarcasm — writers can gain support or change opinions, but often the informal essay is intended purely for entertainment. Students may enjoy reading and comparing essays such as "The Two Races of Men," "A Dissertation Upon Roast Pig" by Charles Lamb (the father of the English essay), or Swift's "A Modest Proposal" as well as works by other essayists such as Robert Benchley, James Thurber, Jean Kerr, E. B. White, and John Ciardi.

2.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Discuss with students the uses made of the essay in the local or school newspaper, such as editorials and syndicated columns. Students may be asked to contribute examples from newspapers for class discussion and bulletin board display. In discussing these, help the students to look for the author's purpose. How can you tell whether the author is just getting something off his chest or is looking for support or to change opinions? Also, this is a good opportunity to help students learn to distinguish fact from opinion.

Have the class brainstorm ideas for formal essays. By now the term "formal" should not have a threatening tone for students but rather should be understood as a synonym, in this case, for "serious." The topics suggested should be ones the students have a personal interest in and strong opinions about. Typical suggestions may be:

Study Halls Are (Are Not) Necessary
Our School Has (Does Not Have) Spirit
Sportsmanship
Our Polluted Environment
The Advantages (Disadvantages) of a Small (Large) School
Teenagers Should (Should Not) Have Part-Time Jobs
Teens Should (Should Not) Have an Allowance
Our Student Council Is (Is Not) Working
Professional Athletes Are (Are Not) Overpaid
_____ Is the Best (Worst) Singer in the Country

Ask students to choose a topic, either one from the suggested list or one of their own, and to write a formal essay. The class should review these points — essays are generally not too long, state the author's opinion(s) on the topic, and provide examples in some logical order to back up opinions. The formal essay is dignified but does not need to be stuffy and does not rely on humor, sarcasm or satire to make its points.

In reviewing the completed essays, the teacher makes constructive comments on the organization, documentation through example, and force of the essay.

Since the opinions expressed by the student are personal, the teacher does not comment on the opinions themselves. Further reaction to the essays may be provided by the class. The essays could be read aloud by their authors or by the teacher. Remind students that they are not to react in terms of the merit of the opinions but in terms of the structural composition. Based on teacher and student review, individual students may revise and rewrite their formal essays.

3.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Formal essays can express individual opinions about topics of general concern regarding the school, city, state, nation, and so on. However, informal essays often relate an experience which has affected the author personally — and they generally are more conversational and lighter in tone. Sometimes, though, the subjects of formal and informal essays are the same and the difference is the tone of their presentation.

Ask your students to rewrite their formal essays as informal ones. This will not mean altering opinions but rather altering presentations. Rather than a serious discussion of the high cost of living, the student might overstate the rapidity of cost increases by taking a humorous trip through a grocery store where costs of goods rise between the shelf and the basket and the check-out counter. Through this writing students will see the difference between the formal and informal essay. They may also find how difficult it is to write humorously. When the essays are completed, they may be compared to the formal ones to determine which gets the point across better. Some of the better examples of both varieties may be submitted for publication in the school newspaper or literary magazine.

4.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

The study of the formal essay can be coordinated with a social studies or current events class. Is there one school, local, state or national issue about which all of the students are interested and have definite opinions? Perhaps some students believe that study halls should be eliminated. Perhaps some feel a new swimming pool is needed. Maybe some feel a need for more industry in their area. Whatever the issue decided upon, it needs to be one about which **all** students have some strong feelings, either positive or negative.

When a topic is selected, an open class debate could be staged to encourage each student to voice his own opinion. Then ask students to put their opinions in a formal essay. Opinions should be documented with examples and with facts as the students perceive them. When the essays are completed and revised, you might suggest that students send them to the appropriate groups or individuals. Time might also be requested on the school public address system or local radio stations. Hopefully, a response will be received which may provide basis for discussion on the power of the people in a democracy.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Students will be able to distinguish between the formal and informal essay and to write their own examples of each.

INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

As every language arts teacher knows, poetry is the arrangement of words in a rhythmic pattern with regular accents. The words are thoughtfully chosen for sound, accent and meaning. They are used imaginatively and creatively to express ideas and emotions. But, how do we convey to students an appreciation for this artful arrangement of words in the most complex of our written forms?

There are at least three different schools of thought on teaching poetry. One says that students cannot be expected to be able to write good poetry before they have read and gained an appreciation for the good poetry of others. A second school believes that students cannot appreciate the works of the recognized poets before they have written their own poetry and come to an understanding of the elements which go into writing poetry. Third, there are undoubtedly many who believe that the reading and writing of poetry go hand-in-hand, and that there must be a mixture between structural analysis and review of content for the poet's message. A student may be able to interpret poetry better by exposure to analysis, but this does not necessarily improve the student's ability to write poetry. This third concept is the premise upon which this section is based, along with the idea that poetry should be fun.

There are four elements of poetry which must be dealt with: rhythm, melody, imagery and form. The amount of technical material relating to poetry is staggering, and an inordinate emphasis on it can defeat a program designed to stimulate student interest in and appreciation of poetry. Teachers must determine for themselves how much of the technical matter to teach and how much just to let students experience. Teachers need to think through the entire poetry unit to determine the most appropriate approach for their students.

The selection of poetry for the class is of the utmost importance. The use of popular music develops a positive attitude, but this attitude can quickly change if other examples used are not relevant or meaningful to the students. Many examples of old poetry with modern themes can be found and can create interest in the idea that people hundreds of years ago had some of the same problems and concerns as we have today. Modern poets, too, must be included to foster the idea of poetry as a living art.

The intent of this unit is to create an interest in and appreciation of poetry. Once these are developed, students may want to learn more of the technical material and read more of the obscure and difficult works. For the time being, however, poetry must be made immediate, relevant and exciting. **Teachers must demonstrate their own love of poetry if they are to convince students of its importance.** Much oral reading of poetry can help to accomplish this. Another method is for the teacher to write with the students. When the class writes, the teacher writes also and shares in the same manner as the students do. This fosters rapport with the students and indicates teacher commitment. And, whenever possible, the inductive or discovery approach should be used. For example, students can be led to discover poetic rhythm through the reading of several particularly rhythmic poems and then be asked what stands out in the poems as being special and artistic.

WHAT IS POETRY?

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students understand and appreciate poetry in terms of its daily influence and its historical significance.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

Students may be the greatest poetry-loving segment of the American population. They buy more records than any other age group because they are so tuned in to rhythm, word pictures and sound, but many may not be aware that popular music is a poetic form. They hum and recite commercial jingles, again not being aware of the poetic implications of the rhythm, rhyme and word pictures the commercials evoke.

Classroom atmosphere is important in setting the stage for an introduction to poetry. Consider decorating a bulletin board with pictures of poets — Poe, Whitman, and Longfellow, as well as popular poets such as Rod McKuen, John Lennon, and Paul Simon. Displaying the pictures with no caption or comment could create some interesting discussions. Consider also making a collage of newspaper and magazine advertisements which contain the popular jingles associated with them such as "plop, plop, fizz, fizz, oh what a relief it is" or "you deserve a break today, so get up and get away." Anyone who finds himself singing a popular song or an advertising jingle cannot be totally against poetry.

The object of this section is to help students see that they are constantly surrounded by poetry and that poetry, whether old or new, has a unique ability to get a message across or to paint a word picture. The message or picture may be pleasant or unpleasant, but it is accomplished with carefully chosen words.

Teachers who are good listeners will always be listening while students talk. They will note sentences which have a poetic quality to them, write them on the chalkboard, and discuss them in poetic terms to help students understand that poetry is really just a way of talking or writing.

1. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Divide the class into two groups. Ask the members of the first group to write a sentence which begins, "Yesterday I . . ." They may take the word "yesterday" literally or figuratively and complete the sentence with an action or an emotion. The second group is asked to write sentences beginning, "Tomorrow I . . ." Again, "tomorrow" may be taken literally or figuratively, and the sentence is completed with an action or an emotion.

After the students have had a few minutes to complete their sentences, collect them, keeping the two types of sentences separated. Lead the class in a discussion of what they think poetry is. Include the ideas of poetry as word pictures, as an expression of feeling or action through a few carefully chosen words, and so on. Poetry can be serious or humorous, structured or free. When you feel the important concepts of poetry have been discussed, tell the class that the sentences they have written can be combined to become a poem.

Read the sentences randomly but alternating the "yesterday" and "tomorrow" ones, or ask students to volunteer to do this. The effect of combining unrelated sentences will be interesting and often humorous. After the random reading, you may be able to produce one or two shorter "poems" by choosing those sentences which seem to fit in some way. The effect may still be

humorous, but the results will provide the basis for furthering your discussion on what poetry really is.

Give students an opportunity to write their own poems about something they have experienced. In this early writing stage, they may find a device such as the one used above to be helpful although they should not be limited to it. Suggestions might be:

(a) I seem to be . . ./But I really am . . .
(b) I'd like to be . . ./But I still am . . .
(c) I like . . ./But I don't like . . .

Allow students to write in any style they find comfortable. At this point no mention is made of poetic form and devices such as meter, rhyme and imagery. The student works can be shared either by the students or by the teacher or can be tape recorded.

2.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Ask students to scan newspapers and magazines for advertisements which contain jingles. They may use these to construct small posters to display ads which call to mind a song or jingle. Discuss with the class how these songs or jingles can be considered a form of poetry and what effect they have on the listener. Does advertising through verse and song help the listener to remember the ad? While it would be easy at this point to get into an extended discussion on advertising gimmicks and persuasive and biased writing, the real point of the discussion is the effect of poetry on our lives.

Students may be interested in writing an advertising jingle or song for a real or imaginary product. Having been exposed to many professional ads, students will generally have little trouble with this writing. They can rhyme their ads or not, as they see fit, and may present them to the class for conversation and display. Through this activity, students may begin to gain an appreciation for the influence of poetry in their daily lives.

3.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

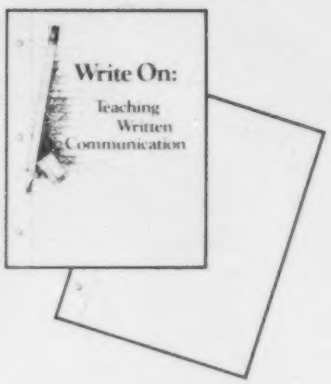
If you have access to a guitarist, ask him to play and sing old ballads with your classes, such as "Bonny Barbara Allan" and "Lord Randal," as well as some modern ones such as those sung by John Denver, Joan Baez and other popular folk singers. Many students may know the words to these ballads, but you may wish to have them printed or shown by an overhead projector.

After singing several of the old ballads, discuss with the class (it would be very effective if the guitarist could lead this discussion) that these are among the oldest surviving ballads in the English language and that their function is to tell a story. Ballads and songs were used to transmit stories and news long before written language was widely used. Since the stories were transmitted orally, they changed frequently through retelling. For instance, a professor doing research into the history of ballads found ninety-two versions of "Barbara Allan" existing in historical records of the State of Virginia alone. The use of ballads predates "Barbara Allan" by many hundreds of years, but the intent has always been the same — the balladeer is a narrator who tells a story without moralizing or judging.

After this discussion, sing some of the modern ballads and compare them with the old ones. How are they the same? How are they different? Through this exercise, students gain an appreciation of the historical significance of poetry and begin to realize that most songs are really poetry put to music. Poetry itself is the music of words.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Students will be able to identify some of the influences of poetry in their daily lives and to relate a personal feeling for the historical significance of poetry.



POETRY AS SOUND

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students learn to recognize, write and appreciate poetic sound or melody.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

Just as every song has a melody or tune, something we can hum, so does poetry. Poetry may not be "hummable," but each poem has its own sound which often helps to create a mood or feeling. Melody in poetry cannot rely on musical notes but must be based on the sounds of the words themselves. There are four main sound devices employed by poets: rhyme, assonance, alliteration and onomatopoeia.

Rhyme is the most often used of the sound devices. It occurs when two words have the same sound on their last accented vowel preceded by different consonants, such as **name** and **tame.** Rhyme can involve only one syllable or several. For instance, **name** and **tame** are single rhymes while **batting** and **patting** are double rhymes and **mournfully** and **scornfully** are triple rhymes. Imperfect rhyme is said to occur when two words look alike but don't sound alike as in **love** and **move.** And internal rhyme occurs within a single line such as, "We **float** the **boat.**" Finally, there are both masculine and feminine rhyme. When the last or only syllable of two rhyming words is accented, the rhyme is said to be masculine; i.e., **defeat** and **retreat.** And when more than one syllable is rhymed and the accent is not on the last syllable, the rhyme is called feminine; i.e., **feather** and **weather.** Some rhyming in a poem makes the poem interesting by creating special effects while too much rhyme, or rhyme poorly used, detracts from the poem and makes it sound sing-songy or jingly.

Assonance is the similarity of vowel sounds although the surrounding consonants usually differ. For instance:

cold **eye**lids that shine like a jewel . . .

And alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sounds as in:

the **s**eething **s**ummer **s**un **s**et **s**lowly

Finally, onomatopoeia is a melodic device in which the words sound like their meanings. Some of these words include:

buzz, bow-wow, drip, fizz, hiss, hoot, meow, murmur, simmer, slap, whisper

Effective use of melodic sound devices or sound effects takes much thought and practice. Skillfully used, they can make a poem sing. Poorly used or abused, they can spell doom for a poem.

1. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Students usually have no trouble with rhyming, especially in isolated situations of merely finding two words that rhyme. Finding words which rhyme and also fit into the context of the poem may present problems, but this will be dealt with later. However, using the other sound effect devices — alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia — generally requires a conscious effort. Again, using these devices in the context of the poem being written is the challenge. They can be practiced in isolated instances more profitably than by merely finding words that rhyme.

Ask students for topics or single nouns and write them on the chalkboard. Examples might be: football, dance, music, girl, car, ice cream, fire, rain, beach, and water. When an extensive list has been compiled, ask students to choose several of the words and try to use each of the three sound effect

devices (except rhyme) to expand these words into phrases or clauses. For instance:

rain
alliteration — The rain ran rampantly to the river.
assonance — The r**ai**n c**a**me t**a**mely through the p**a**ne.
onomatopoeia — The rain **whooshed** down the gutter.

After the students have completed this activity, the results can be shared, anonymously or not, as you choose. The students discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the various contributions and are helped to see that assonance and alliteration can sound artificial and forced. They are most effective when they fit naturally into the flow of thought. Students may wish to keep a list of the onomatopoetic words used by others.

2. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

The study of melodic sound devices can be reinforced by discussing how some of the great authors have used them. Many of the stanzas of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" provide good examples of the different types of rhyme as well as the other sound devices. Students may be asked to read the entire poem, or they may be provided several stanzas which offer particularly good examples.

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

"At length did cross an Albatross,
Through the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

. . . . . .

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

"Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down;
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!"

Whether reading the entire poem or just selected stanzas, students are asked what feeling the sound devices help the stanza to convey. For instance, in the "Fair breeze" stanza, the heavy use of alliteration and internal rhyme give the stanza a feeling of great intensity.

If the class has read Shakespeare's *Othello,* the following stanza provides a good study in the use of consonants. If the class is not familiar with the play, the teacher can set the stage by providing a brief synopsis. At this time, Othello is outraged by Iago's insinuations and swears revenge against him. The violence is expressed in a spluttering outburst of explosive consonant sounds **(b,d,k,p,t)** mixed with the hissing of **s** sounds.

Like to the Pontic sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont;
Even so my bloody thoughts, violent pace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up.

Ask students to find examples of melodic sound effect devices in other poems. In discussing the effects of the devices, students are helped to see that the effects will only operate if the sense of the words reinforces and is reinforced by the sound devices. In other words, in Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade," the words

"Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward . . ."

represent the sounds of hoof beats, but this sound is only meaningful because it is emphasized by the context of the rest of the stanza and poem.

The following poem may be very appealing to students. The school basketball coach can be helpful if he will agree to record a reading of the poem. While capturing student interest, the poem also will provide good examples of some of the sound effect devices being studied and may provide impetus for the students to create their own "melodic" descriptions of similar events of relevance and importance to them.

FOUL SHOT
by Edwin A. Hoey

With two 60's stuck on the scoreboard
And two seconds hanging on the clock,
The solemn boy in the center of eyes,
Squeezed by silence,
Seeks out the line with his feet,
Soothes his hands along his uniform,
Gently drums the ball against the floor,
Then measures the waiting net,
Raises the ball on his right hand,
Balances it with his left,
Calms it with fingertips,
Breathes,
Crouches,
Waits,
And then through a stretching of stillness,
Nudges it upward.

The ball
Slides up and out,
Lands,
Leans,
Wobbles,
Wavers,
Hesitates,
Exasperates,
Plays it coy

Until every face begs with unsounding screams —
And then
And then
And then
Right before ROAR-UP,
Dives down and through.

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3.

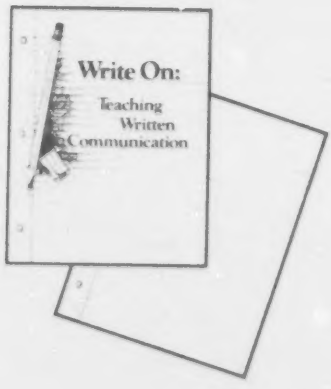
SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Either as a class or in small groups, students suggest sounds such as hoof beats, a train, a waterfall, a racing car, rain, a crowd, and so on. When a variety of sounds has been listed on the chalkboard, ask the students to choose one as the topic of a poem. The poems may be written by groups, pairs or individuals. Students are asked to use rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia and assonance as well as rhythm. In this activity, students are helped to realize that it is not necessary or possible to use all of these devices in the same poem.

The poems can be shared with the class in order to discuss how well a word picture was drawn or what might be done to improve the poem. Students may wish to revise their poems and illustrate them for classroom display.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Students will be able to identify the melodic or sound effects devices used in a poem — rhyme, alliteration, assonance, and onomatopoeia — and to utilize these devices in their own writing.



POETRY AS RHYTHM

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students learn to recognize, write and appreciate the rhythmic structure of poetry.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

Except for free verse which is based on the natural cadences of speech and therefore has no formal metrical pattern, all poetry has rhythm (metrical pattern). Poetry is the music of words, and the rhythm is the accented syllables in the words which fall at regular intervals like the beats of music. Each beat comprises an accented syllable and one or more unaccented syllables. The beat is called "meter," and the combination of accented and unaccented syllables is called a "poetic foot."

There is a variety of ways to teach the concepts of metric patterns and poetic feet. Some teachers insist that students learn the names and definitions of each of the terms and concepts while others concentrate more on understanding of the concepts. If students do, indeed, understand the concepts, they do not need to memorize all of the terms to be able to appreciate reading and writing poetry. Struggling to learn the many terms and definitions could dampen their enthusiasm before students get into what poetry is about. There is a page of poetic rhythm definitions and patterns in the Appendices of this book.

1.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Capitalizing on students' interest in popular music, ask them to bring to class the lyrics of one or more popular songs. You may wish to spend part of a class period or the entire period singing some of these songs. This activity is a natural introduction to poetic rhythm and beat, because songs are really poetry put to music. For discussion purposes, you may wish to copy the lyrics of one song on the chalkboard, place them on an overhead projector, or distribute them to the students. The first stanza of "The Sound of Silence" by Paul Simon is an example:

> Hello darkness, my old friend,
> I've come to talk with you again,
> Because a vision softly creeping
> Left its seeds while I was sleeping
> And the vision that was planted in my brain still remains
> Within the sounds of silence.
>
> © 1964, Paul Simon. Used with the permission of the publisher.

Sing the song with the class several times, asking them to feel free to clap. The students will relate readily to the concepts of rhythm and beat. Then ask the students to **say** the poem with similar rhythm. They will see that the rhythm speeds up somewhat without music because the lines flow naturally together.

After the students have **said** the words several times, ask them to read them rhythmically again, marking the accented syllables on their papers with a (/) while the teacher marks the copy on the board. The remaining or

unaccented syllables can be marked with a (◡). The finished product will look like this:

/ ◡ / ◡ / ◡ /
Hello darkness, my old friend,
◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡ /
I've come to talk with you again,
◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡
Because a vision softly creeping
/ ◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡
Left its seeds while I was sleeping
/ ◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡ / / ◡ /
And the vision that was planted in my brain still remains
◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡
Within the sounds of silence.

When the students are comfortable with the concept of poetic rhythm, the idea of metric pattern can be introduced. The students will discover that a poetic foot is the combination of accented and unaccented syllables falling in a regular pattern and usually including only one accented syllable. Show students how poetic feet are marked. You may wish to name the feet, although this is not necessary. The example used to discuss rhythm can be used again to mark feet. Poetry is often interpreted in many different ways. So, too, is the process of scansion or marking lines to show feet and meter. In the following example, each line is marked separately.

/ ◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡
Hello / darkness, / my old / friend, /
◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡ /
I've come / to talk / with you / again, /
◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡ /
Because / a vi / sion soft / ly creeping /
/ ◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡
Left its / seeds while / I was / sleeping, /
/ ◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡
And the / vision / that was / planted / in my / brain /
/ ◡ /
still remains /
◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡
Within / the sounds / of silence. /

However, a case could also be made for running all of the lines together and scanning the entire verse. While the example may be somewhat confusing, it shows how a poet/lyricist can employ different devices within the same poem.

/ ◡ / ◡ / ◡ /
Hello / darkness, / my old / friend,
◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡ /
I've / come to / talk with / you a / gain,
◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡
Be / cause a / vision / softly / creeping /
/ ◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡
Left its / seeds while / I was / sleeping, /
/ ◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡
And the / vision / that was / planted / in my / brain /
/ ◡ /
still re / mains
◡ / ◡ / ◡ / ◡
With / in the / sounds of / silence. /

The subject of poetic feet can be easily discussed at this point since the feet were marked during the study of metric patterns. Ask the students to mark the metric pattern of the lyrics they brought to class as the example has been marked. The students may find this difficult since lyrics are often irregular, and you will need to give them a great deal of guidance. But, it will reinforce the concepts, terms and definitions while capitalizing on student interest in popular music.

2. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

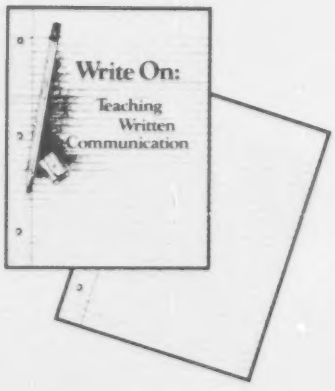
More extensive experience may be provided in the rhythmic concepts before students are asked to write. Students could be asked to copy short poems, from their textbooks or library books, which have metric patterns they particularly enjoy. These could be read to the class to help the students become aware of the sounds of poetry.

3. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Ask students to suggest topics which they might use to compose rhythmic lines. The idea needs to be simple and one about which the student has some particular feeling. Then, ask students to write word pictures which sing about their topic, trying to follow a particular metric pattern. Suggest that the student read his lines aloud to himself as a test of their effectiveness. These lines can be recorded by the students or the teacher and then played for class discussion of metric patterns and response to the feeling of the verse.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Each student will be able to analyze a verse of poetry and identify the metric patterns and to compose verses following a particular pattern.



POETRY AS DESCRIPTION

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students learn to recognize, appreciate and write poetic imagery.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

Imagery can be evoked in a poem through the use of sound effect devices such as the sound of hoof beats in Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade." Poetic imagery can also be realized by a number of devices which compare and contrast or which exaggerate. Not all poetry has imagery in the strict sense of the term. Some poems really "tell it like it is" and leave the image-drawing to the reader's imagination. Other poems rely on devices to assist the reader in seeing an image by painting vivid word pictures through imaginative figures of speech.

Any of the image-producing figures of speech can be and are used in all types of creative writing, but they are most often found in poetry. Included among these devices are: simile, metaphor, personification, apostrophe, literary allusion, hyperbole, understatement, irony, antithesis, synecdoche, and metonymy. While it is not necessary for students to include all of these figures in their own writing, they need to try their hand at using them and need to recognize and understand them if they are to understand and appreciate poetry. Through the study of these devices, students are helped to see that comparisons which are too obvious or far-fetched—or too obscure—can ruin the message or the mood which the poet is trying to convey. Well-used, however, they work in harmony with rhythm and melody to reinforce the poet's intent. A section on poetic image is found in the appendices.

1.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

The lyrics of popular songs contributed earlier by students in the study of rhythm could be reexamined for their use of imagery. An alternative to this approach is to play recordings of popular songs. Hearing the lyrics will help students understand that poetry is the music of words. The students may be asked to discuss the meanings of the songs and the use of image devices. They can discuss the effects of these devices and how the meanings of the songs might change if the devices are not used.

Using the lyrics of familiar songs will make the study of poetic images less forbidding as students realize that they are already familiar with some of the image-making devices, although not by name. Students may find that they understand their favorite songs better after having discussed the image devices.

Another possibility for use in this section is the collection of poems included as part of the study of poetic forms. Using these or other poems after introducing popular songs will not only reinforce the various image devices but will also help make the transition from music to poetry easier. The intent of these activities is to assist students in recognizing and understanding the various forms of imagery, not necessarily to memorize the definitions of the various terms. Learning the definitions will come naturally from working with the concepts.

2.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

In order for poetic imagery to be successful, it must be understandable. If the comparison is too obscure or the exaggeration too overstated, it will detract from rather than add to the quality and effect of the poem. Ask each student to choose one of the image devices and to write an image at the top of a sheet of paper. Students will exchange their papers and try to identify the type of device used (simile, metaphor, and so on) by the writer. Then each student will try to make another type of image using the same subject that the original writer used. For instance:

1. The train roared through the tunnel like a lion after its prey.

   simile

2. The train is a serpent coiling itself around the mountain.

   metaphor

3. Great Train, declare your might to those who doubt.

   personification

The papers are exchanged as many times as possible until a student can no longer use the subject with a different device. Students should be asked to make their images as clear and realistic as possible. The person who tried to identify the type of image device can feel free to make constructive comments on how the image might be improved. These efforts may be shared with the entire class and may prove a valuable resource to students when they attempt to include some of the devices in their own writing.

3.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Poetic imagery also includes sensory writing, for creating images really involves the stimulation of one or more of the senses. Practice in sensory writing can be gained by reviewing—or previewing—the section on short story settings. Students may also be asked to read or listen to recordings of one or more of the following poems and to identify the images and describe the senses which were stimulated.

"Meeting at Night"—Robert Browning
"Sea Fever"—John Masefield
"The Seal"—William Jay Smith

4.

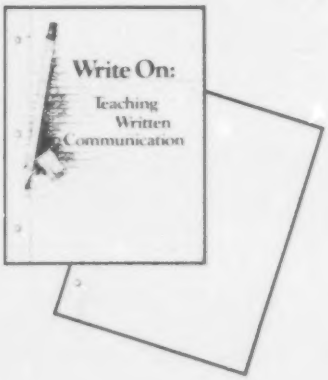
SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Using the topic which was used for the second application—or another topic—each student will compose a poem. By using their original topics, students will be able to take advantage of the thinking of their classmates who have applied different poetic images to the topic and perhaps have offered constructive suggestions for improvement. The student poem may be rhymed or unrhymed and can include as many of the sound devices and image devices as can be used smoothly. The poem should have a definite rhythm although it does not need to follow a regular beat. This activity calls for an application of the skills learned in prior lessons and also stimulates student imagination.

You may wish to make constructive written comments on the completed poems—both the strong points and suggestions for improvement. This same type of critique could be given by other students. Each student could adopt a pseudonym or other code to protect his anonymity. When the poems are revised, students may wish to read theirs to the class or to illustrate them for classroom display. As in other activities, the teacher will reinforce the students' efforts if he also writes a poem and shares it.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Students will be able to identify and interpret poetic imagery and to compose their own poetry using some of the different types of poetic imagery.



POETRY AS FORM

OBJECTIVE

To enable the teacher to help students recognize and appreciate some of the various poetic forms and gain experience in writing several of them.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCEPT

Poetic form can have two meanings—either the rhyme and meter of stanzas (heroic couplet, rime royal, and so on) or the various genres (ballad, ode, and so forth). There is much technical information on these two concepts, and the teacher must decide how much and how to present it.

Too much concentration on the technical aspects can get in the way of gaining an appreciation for and desire to write poetry. These ideas may seem to work counter to each other, but if students can become interested and enthusiastic about the feeling of poetry, they will probably be more inclined to want to learn the technical aspects. Therefore, it is suggested that, **while the technical information needs to be presented, the emphasis should be on the feelings of the different types of poetry and on encouraging students to express their own feelings in verse.**

As a reference, definitions of stanza forms and poetic forms are found in the appendices. The main emphasis of this lesson is to expose students to some of the various poetic forms so that they will see new ways of expressing their thoughts and feelings.

1.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Distribute several copies of some or all of the different types of poetry included in the appendices. Try to include both old and recent examples of each form, although this may not always be possible. If you have good examples written by students during a previous year, you may wish to include one or more of these, for they might well be an inspiration to your present classes. Because the theme of the poetry is important in arousing student interest, you should select some modern concerns or topics. Intermingle the different types of poetry, and do not label the poems in any way other than by title and author.

By discussing the individual poems, students can gain an appreciation of themes as well as learn to recognize different poetic forms. As each type is discussed, students may wish to list its characteristics on a worksheet. At this point, names may be attached to the various forms if you wish. Through this activity, students will see that, except for the sonnet, the type of poetry is determined by theme rather than stanza form.

If poems are chosen not only on the basis of genre but also because of their timely theme, students may be surprised to find the poetry speaking to them and may be inspired to read more of the works of one or more of the authors represented. After an example in each of the genres has been read and discussed, the students may be asked to read and analyze the remaining poems to see if they can discover to which genre each belongs. If presented in a stimulating manner, this activity is more of a game or a challenge than a burden. You may wish to include subtle differences in order to challenge the students further; e.g. including both English and Italian (Shakespearean and Petrarchan) sonnets. Through this discussion and analysis, students are helped to discover some of the various poetic forms and the fact that some forms may be more appropriate to certain uses than to others.

2. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

The sonnet is often a popular form with students despite the rigid requirements it must meet. Either as a class or in smaller groups, ask students to suggest ideas for sonnets. Pictures or recordings may be used to stimulate ideas and evoke emotions. When a topic has been selected, the entire class reviews the characteristics of a sonnet, and each student is asked to assist in developing a class (group) sonnet, one line at a time. As one line is volunteered and written on the chalkboard, the class tests it for beat and meter as well as for the content. When the first line is accepted, a second one is called for. Each successive line is tested, and any line can be altered at any time. Each line is analyzed, too, for sound devices and imagery.

Through this activity students gain a feeling of accomplishment as well as a sense of the hard work involved in stating feelings and emotions in such a rigid form. In writing a class or group sonnet, some students may have had to compromise their own feelings. Therefore, some may wish to write their own sonnets on a topic of their own choosing, or the class may select one topic for the entire class. Another idea is to play a recording of music unfamiliar to the students and ask them to interpret their own feelings toward the music in the form of a sonnet.

This writing gives students the opportunity to combine the various elements of poetry and to develop their own skills. When the sonnets are completed, they can be read to the class by their authors or by the teacher. It will be interesting to compare the various emotions portrayed in the sonnets. The musical selections might be played in the background during the reading.

3. SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

High school students generally have many more emotional responses or reactions to life than younger students. Ask the students to identify some of the different emotions they have experienced, and list these on the chalkboard. The list might include: love, joy, fear, anger, hurt, despair, pain, agony, terror, disappointment, elation, and ecstasy. The class may wish to discuss different types of events which might elicit these emotional responses. Probably these will be very common events which all students experience. If some students mention something in nature or in fantasy that elicits an emotional response, you may wish to discuss a poem such as Wordsworth's "My Heart Leaps Up" or the lyrics to some popular song which glorifies such emotional responses.

The students may be asked what they do with their emotions. If they hide some emotions, how do they feel and act then? For instance, if a boy has tried very hard to make the football team and is cut, he will be hurt and disappointed. He may also feel angry. Hurt and disappointment are often internalized, and the person has to put up a facade. Or, the anger may take precedence. The boy may slam his locker, throw his books, and so on.

Ask the class to read and discuss one or more poems which deal with emotional responses. Through reading these, students will see that some people channel their emotions into poetry where they feel they can deal more honestly with their own emotional responses. Some appropriate poems might be Housman's "With Rue My Heart Is Laden" or "Loveliest of Trees," Poe's "To Helen," Pope's "Solitude."

Students may be asked to choose some specific incident and emotional response from their own experience and try to capture that emotion in verse. They should not be limited by any poetic convention, or by length requirements. They can be rhymed or unrhymed. They can follow any form and may or may not include sound devices and imagery. The important thing is that the poems deal with an emotional response. In your reactions to the drafts, you may help students discover how alliteration, a simile, and other devices paint a more vivid picture. However, since this kind of writing can be highly personal, caution should be exercised in commenting on the content, and only those students who wish to do so should share their poems with the class.

4.

SUGGESTED APPLICATION WITH LEARNERS

Having explored and discussed the various forms of poetry, students are asked to define what poetry is to them. Some of the responses might be:

dramatic use of language
carefully chosen words
few words
can be about any subject
often includes rhyme and rhythm
can say one thing and mean another
one of the most imaginative and intense uses of language
often depends heavily on use of sound
can be very personal
can mean many different things to different people

At this point, students will have gained a basic understanding and appreciation of poetry as an art form and will realize that poetry surrounds them daily. Some of it has interest and meaning for them while some poetry does not. This is true of any form of writing. Not all writing holds the same interest and appeal for all people, but people can appreciate the whole without appreciating all of its parts.

SUGGESTED CRITERION REFERENCED MEASUREMENT

Students will be able to analyze a poem in terms of its form as well as the other concepts of poetry and to write a poem following one of the standard, accepted forms.

GENERAL REVIEW NOTES (answers to pretest)

1. The primary goals of language arts teachers are to help students develop skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. The primary goals achieve the ultimate goal of helping students become better communicators.
2. I + E + V = C or Interest + Experience + Vocabulary = Creativity
3. Creative writing and functional writing differ in the following ways:
   Creative writing is subjective; functional writing is objective.
   Creative writing is imaginative; functional writing is factual.
   Creative writing offers personal interpretation; functional writing does not.
   Creative writing is a leisure/social activity; functional writing is a business-like activity.
   The effectiveness of creative writing is not often measurable; that of functional writing is easily measurable.
   Creative writing does not need an audience; functional writing does.
4. The three major elements of a short story are character, setting and plot.
5. Biographies and autobiographies are similar in the following ways:
   They can be written by or about anyone.
   They show rather than tell about a person's achievements and let the readers make their own judgments.
   They follow no set form although they are usually in chronological order.
   They can be about a person's whole life or just one segment of it.
   They relate those events which had a significant impact on the subject.
   They distill long periods of time into phases through brief narrative.
6. Formal essays are serious and dignified while informal essays are chatty and usually humorous.
7. The four major elements of poetry are rhythm, melody, imagery and form.
8. A good paragraph is like a good play in that both have an introduction, a body and a conclusion.
9. Included among reasons for outlining are:
   to pick out main and supporting ideas
   to see relationships
   to understand the logical order of a topic
   to promote understanding
   to provide a review tool
   to give direction
   to clarify thinking
10. The study of application forms may be justified because everyone fills out a variety of forms in a lifetime. The applicant's use of writing skills can mean the difference between acceptance and rejection.
11. Good news articles and reports are designed to inform the reader. They emphasize facts and explanations while excluding opinions as much as possible.
12. Included among the words which signal essay-type questions are:
    explain
    describe
    compare
    contrast
    define
    discuss
13. The ultimate goal in helping students write research papers is to introduce them to the personal values of research writing.
14. In most types of functional or business writing, word choice should be precise and exact in order to convey a clear message. In most types of creative writing, word choice can be freer; more colorful and descriptive words can be used because the precision of meaning is not as important.

APPENDICES

POETIC RHYTHM

DEFINITIONS

beat the accent or stress in the rhythm; also called "meter"

caesura a pause which may take the place of an unaccented syllable in a poetic foot

inversion the variation of meter within a line of poetry

meter see "beat"

metric pattern the accents of syllables in the words; these fall at regular intervals like the beats of music

poetic foot the combination of accented and unaccented syllables falling in a regular pattern; usually includes only one accented syllable

scansion marking a line of poetry to show the feet and meter

METRIC PATTERNS

No. of Syllables per Foot	Technical Name	Accented – ´ Unaccented – ˘	Examples
*2	iambic	˘ ´	a WAY I WILL
*2	trochaic	´ ˘	COM ing DO it
2	spondee	´ ´	RIGHT NOW JOHN SMITH
2	pyrrhic	˘ ˘	
*3	anapestic	˘ ˘ ´	can non ADE let us IN
*3	dactylic	´ ˘ ˘	VIC tor ies TWO of them
3	tribrach	˘ ˘ ˘	
3	amphibrach	˘ ´ ˘	in TEN sive con DU cive
3	amphimacer	´ ˘ ´	COL on ADE CAN you SEE?

*most commonly used metric patterns

POETIC FEET

1 foot—monometer	4 feet—tetrameter	7 feet—heptameter
2 feet—dimeter	5 feet—pentameter	8 feet—octameter
3 feet—trimeter	6 feet—hexameter	9 feet—nonameter

POETIC IMAGERY

(imaginative figures of speech)

I. COMPARISON

A. Simile — the comparison of two unlike objects, using "like" or "as"

"Her hair drooped round her pallid cheeks
Like seaweed on a clam . . ."

— Holmes, "The Ballad of the Oysterman"

B. Metaphor — the direct comparison of two unlike objects

"What is our life? a play of passion: . . ."

— Ralegh, "What is Our Life?"

C. Personification — the giving of human qualities to things

"The fog comes
on little cat feet.
It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on."

— Sandburg, "Fog"

D. Apostrophe — the addressing of some abstract object; often involves personification

"Elected Silence, sing to me . . ."

— Hopkins, "The Habit of Perfection"

E. Literary Allusion — the reference, metaphorically, to persons, places and things from other literature

"In Bacchic glee they file toward fate . . ."

— Melville, "The March into Virginia"

II. EXAGGERATION

A. Hyperbole — deliberate overstatement used to magnify a fact or emotion in order to attribute great importance to it

"Hark, how my Celia, with the choice
Music of her hand and voice
Stills the loud wind; and makes the wild
Incensed boar and panther mild; . . ."

B. Understatement — opposite of hyperbole; saying less than is true; usually ironic in intent

"Losing his hearing meant he could ignore the constant questions."

C. Irony — saying the opposite of what is true

"We know, too, they are very fond of war,
A pleasure — like all pleasures — rather dear; . . ."

D. Antithesis — the use of contrasts to create an effect

"December is cold; July is hot."

E. Synecdoche — the use of parts for the whole

"The prince was born of good **blood.**"

F. Metonymy — the substitution of one word for another

"The **crown** decreed it to be so."

STANZA FORMS

**Long poems usually consist of lines grouped into sets called stanzas. A group of lines containing a single thought is called a strophe.

No. of Lines	Name	Description
2	Rhymed Couplet	2 lines with identical rhymes
2	Heroic Couplet	2 iambic pentameter lines w/ identical rhymes
3	Tercet, Triplet	3 lines with any rhyme scheme or meter
4	Quatrain	4 lines with any rhyme scheme, any length, and any meter
4	Ballad Quatrain	Rhyme scheme—a b c b 1st and 3rd lines—iambic tetrameter 2nd and 4th lines—iambic trimeter
5	Quintet, Cinquain	5 lines
6	Sestet	6 lines (usually 3 sets of couplets)
7	Rime Royal	7 iambic pentameter lines rhyme scheme—a b a b b c c
8	Octave	8 line stanza
8	Ottava Rima	8 iambic pentameter lines rhyme scheme—a b a b a b c c
9	Spenserian Stanza	8 iambic pentameter lines 1 iambic hexameter line rhyme scheme—a b a b b c b c c
14	Sonnet	Complete poem of 14 iambic pentameter lines 1 form—3 quatrains plus 1 couplet with rhyme scheme a b a b c d c d e f e f g g 1 form—8 rhyming lines a b b a, a b b a, 6 rhyming lines c d e c d e (or) c d c d e e
Blank Verse		Usually iambic pentameter but no rhyme
Free Verse		No regular rhyme or rhythm

POETIC FORMS

Class	Genre	Description and/or Examples
Narrative (tells a story)	Epic	A long poem about a hero or group of people ex.—"Aeneid" by Virgil "Divine Comedy" by Dante "Iliad" and "Odyssey" by Homer

Class	Genre	Description and/or Examples
	Metrical Romance	Shorter than epic; romanticized story of person or group of people ex.—"Song of Roland" "King Arthur" "Idylls of the King" by Tennyson "Barbara Frietchie" by Whittier
	Ballad	A very short story ex.—"Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Coleridge "Wreck of the Hesperus" by Longfellow Much ancient and modern folk music
	Fable	A short, moralistic story; usually about animals ex.—poems by Walter De La Mare Gilbert K. Chesterton
	Novel	Rare but legitimate novels ex.—"Each to the Other" by Oliver LaFarge
Lyric (most popular; short & emotional)	Ode	A poem in praise of some one or some thing ex.—"Ode on a Grecian Urn" by Keats "Ode to the West Wind" by Shelley
	Elegy	A poem in lament or memory of someone ex.—"Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard" by Gray
	Epitaph	A short elegy inscribed on a monument ex.—"Epitaph on His Wife" by Dryden
	Epigram	A satirical poem ending with a witticism ex.—some poems by Emerson, Pope and Goldsmith
	Pastoral	A poem dealing with country life ex.—some of Wordsworth's poems
	Sonnet	A popular form of lyric poetry; 14 lines ex.—see Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Elizabeth Barrett Browning
	Dramatic Lyric	An emotional monologue or dialogue ex.—"Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" by Wordsworth
	Song	A hymn or any rhymed song ex.—"The Passionate Shepard to His Love" by Marlowe "A Hymn to God the Father" by Donne
Other	Didactic	A poem intended to instruct ex.—"Art of Poetry" by Horace "Georgics" by Virgil
	Satire	A poem attacking folly through ridicule ex.—"Rape of the Lock" by Pope "Biglow Papers" by Lowell
	Drama	A story poem told through character speeches ex.—"Death of the Hired Man" by Frost "The Cocktail Party" by T. S. Eliot
	Humorous	Dialect, limerick, jingle, etc. ex.--see Ogden Nash, Langston Hughes, etc.

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